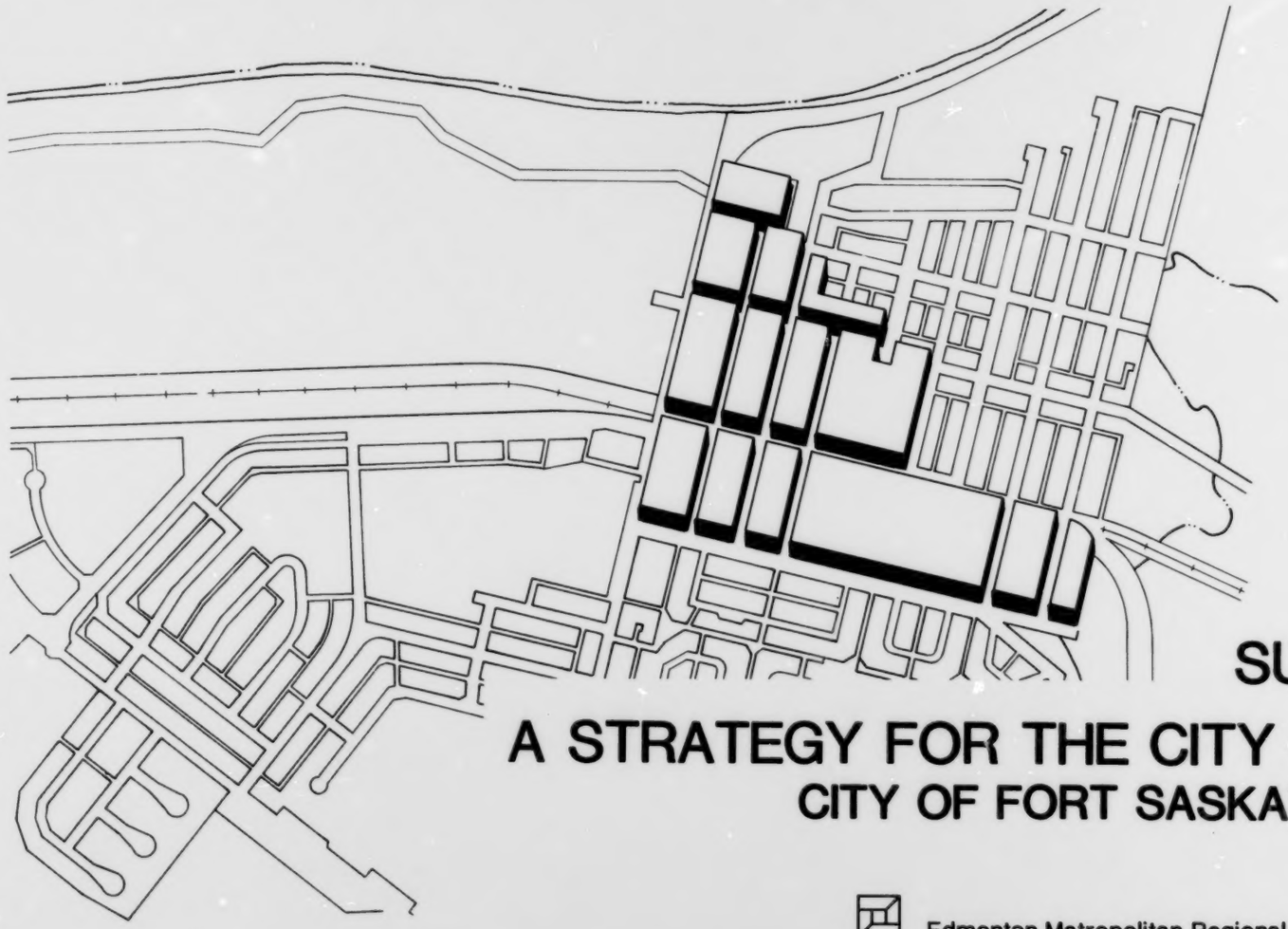

SUMMARY

A STRATEGY FOR THE CITY CENTRE
CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

INTRODUCTION

Fort Saskatchewan is an exciting community with the potential for a vibrant and dynamic city centre. Its citizens and business people, proud of the City's colourful past, are committed to progress and prosperity in the future. In fact, Fort Saskatchewan possesses the essential ingredients necessary to achieve success - a unique historical identity, modern shopping facilities, a strong employment base, a large regional trading area and an energetic and enthusiastic business sector. However, the downturn in the economy and increasing competition from Edmonton's suburban shopping malls have posed a challenge to the strength and vitality of Fort Saskatchewan's city centre. In order to meet this challenge, an overall strategy for the development, marketing and organization of the city centre has become necessary.

The City Centre Planning Committee was established to develop just such a strategy. This Committee, comprised of elected officials and local businessmen, met over an eight month period, beginning in November, 1984. The Committee was assisted by the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission and CPM Planning Services, and by the results of a comprehensive business survey administered to all operating businesses located in the centre. In addition, a special information meeting and a public hearing were held at which members of the general public and business community expressed their views.

The overall strategy developed from this process addresses the major issues facing the Fort Saskatchewan city centre in the 1980s. Unlike a traditional plan, which rigidly defines the future form of a community's retail core, the strategy sets out 'statements of policy' and 'action programs'. The policies establish a decision-making framework to guide elected officials and civic administrators in planning and development matters. The programs identify general directions to be taken to resolve an issue or problem and pave the way for more specific actions to be pursued at a later date. Thus, the strategy is a working document, designed to accept and to encourage the changes and refinements that will normally occur. At the actual implementation stage, the policies and programs may need to be revised as other, and perhaps better, solutions emerge.

The ten issues comprising the strategy, together with the policies and programs designed to address these issues, are reviewed in this summary Jocument. For a detailed description of the policies and programs, the complete plan should be consulted.

STRONG ROLE

The Fort Saskatchewan city centre has historically served as the focus for business activity in the community. In recent years, however, some commercial development has moved to areas outside the city centre (into industrial parks, neighbourhood shopping centres and highway commercial strips). The strategy proposes that the city centre retain its central role despite this movement. This would be accomplished by encouraging a wide variety of commercial, residential and institutional development to locate in the central core. At the same time, select types of commercial activity with special locational requirements would still be allowed outside the city centre.

POLICIES

Policy 1: Multi-Faceted City Centre

That the City will encourage and promote the location of a diverse variety of compatible commercial development within the city centre, as well as higher density housing, public and private institutional uses and community recreational facilities.

Policy 2: Community Shopping Focus

That the City will maintain the city centre as the shopping focus of the community.

Policy 3: Selective Decentralization

That the City will allow selected types of commercial development to locate in defined areas outside the city centre (e.g. in highway commercial strips, business and industrial parks, neighbourhood shopping centres).

PROGRAMS

Program A: Business Location Policy

That policy concerning the distribution of commercial development in the City be clarified and strengthened.

ROLE

FORT SASKATCHEWAN CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

EXISTING COMMERCIAL AREA

- City Centre
- Neighbourhood Shopping Centre

POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL EXPANSION AREA

- Service Commercial
- Business Park
- Community Shopping Centre

Source: Fort Saskatchewan General Municipal Plan, Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

Southfort Outline Plan, McKenzie Spencer Associates, Planning Consultants

Note: All land use classifications are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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Not To Scale

CONCENTRATED GROWTH

The Fort Saskatchewan city centre is clearly defined by several man-made and natural features (i.e. river valley, creek drainage basin, gaol property, residential neighbourhoods). However, the direction of future expansion is unclear at this time and some land use conflicts have arisen at the residential interface with the city centre. The strategy proposes that future development be concentrated on vacant and underdeveloped properties in the retail core, and that the adjacent residential areas be protected. In the longer term, city centre growth would be directed to the provincial gaol and CN railway properties.

POLICIES

Policy 4: Concentrated Core

That the City will direct shorter term city centre development to the vacant and underdeveloped properties within the existing retail core.

Policy 5: Residential Protection

That the City will protect established residential neighbourhoods on the periphery of the city centre from the premature intrusion of non-compatible, higher density development.

Policy 6: Comprehensive Growth

That the City will direct long term city centre expansion to the gaol and railway properties, and possibly the public school site, and any future development of these areas will occur on a comprehensively planned basis.

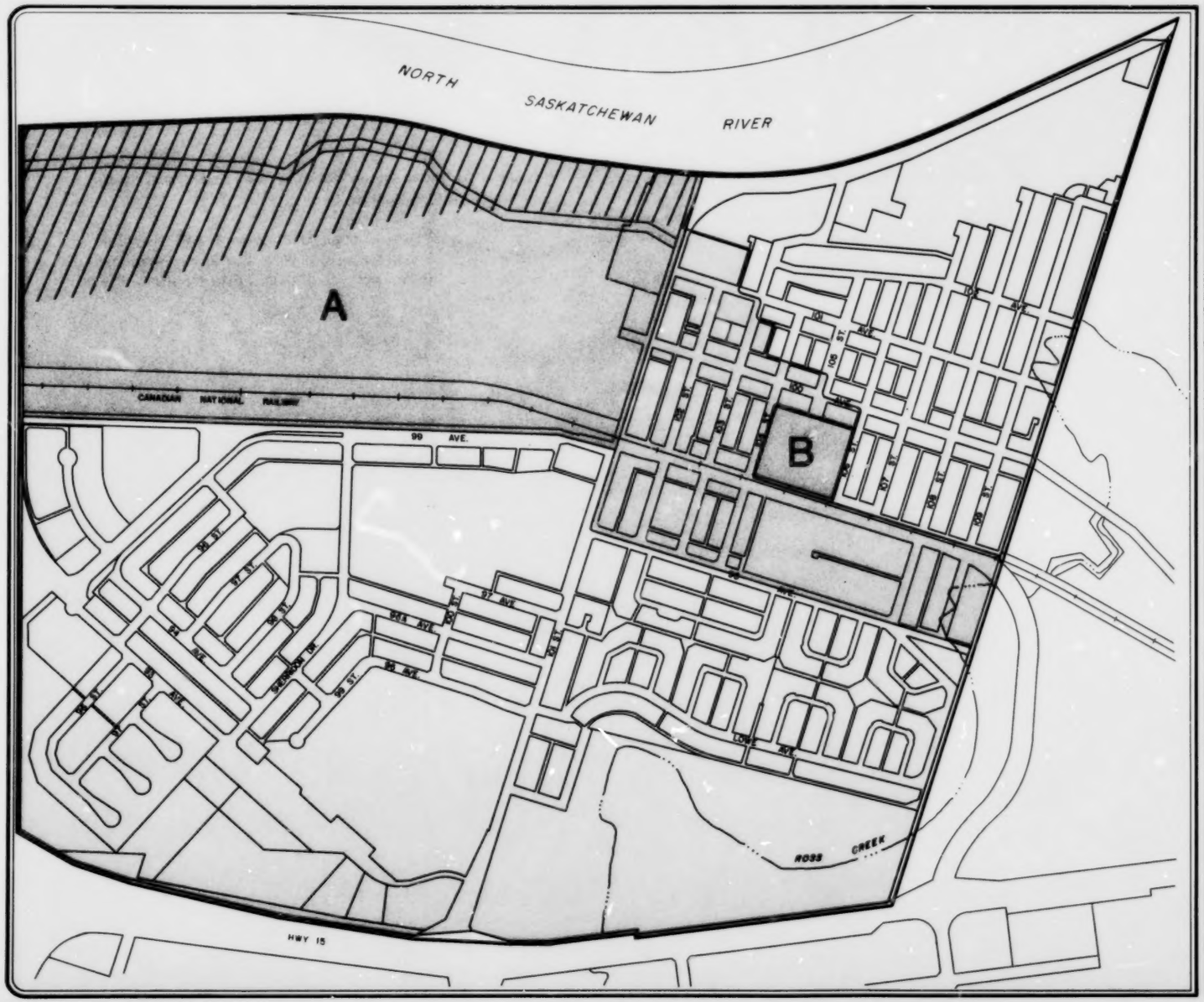
PROGRAMS

Program B: Concentration of Shorter Term Growth

That measures to concentrate commercial development, in the short term, within the existing city centre and to protect peripheral residential neighbourhoods be examined and introduced.

Program C: Gaol and Railway Development

That liaison continue between the City and the Province concerning the disposition and development of the gaol and railway properties, and that an Urban Design Plan for these properties be prepared.



GROWTH

FORT SASKATCHEWAN CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- City Centre
- Area of Restricted City Centre Growth
- Area of Future City Centre Growth
- A Gaol/Railway Properties
- B Elementary School Site
- Undevelopable Area (Situated within river valley flood plain)

Note: All land use classifications are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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INTEGRATED STRUCTURE

Although the Fort Saskatchewan city centre is concentrated within a twelve block area, it is divided into two separate areas north and south of 99th Avenue and the CN railway tracks. The strategy proposes that these two areas be integrated into a cohesive retail core. This would require the introduction of development projects that encourage movement between the two areas (e.g. a centrally located farmers' market); the placement of signs and traffic control measures which direct motorists to major destination points throughout the city centre; and the improvement of the pedestrian system to encourage 'foot-traffic' across 99th Avenue. The longer term redevelopment of the CN railway land, along with a redesign of the surrounding street system, will provide for a better integration of the north and south commercial areas.

POLICIES

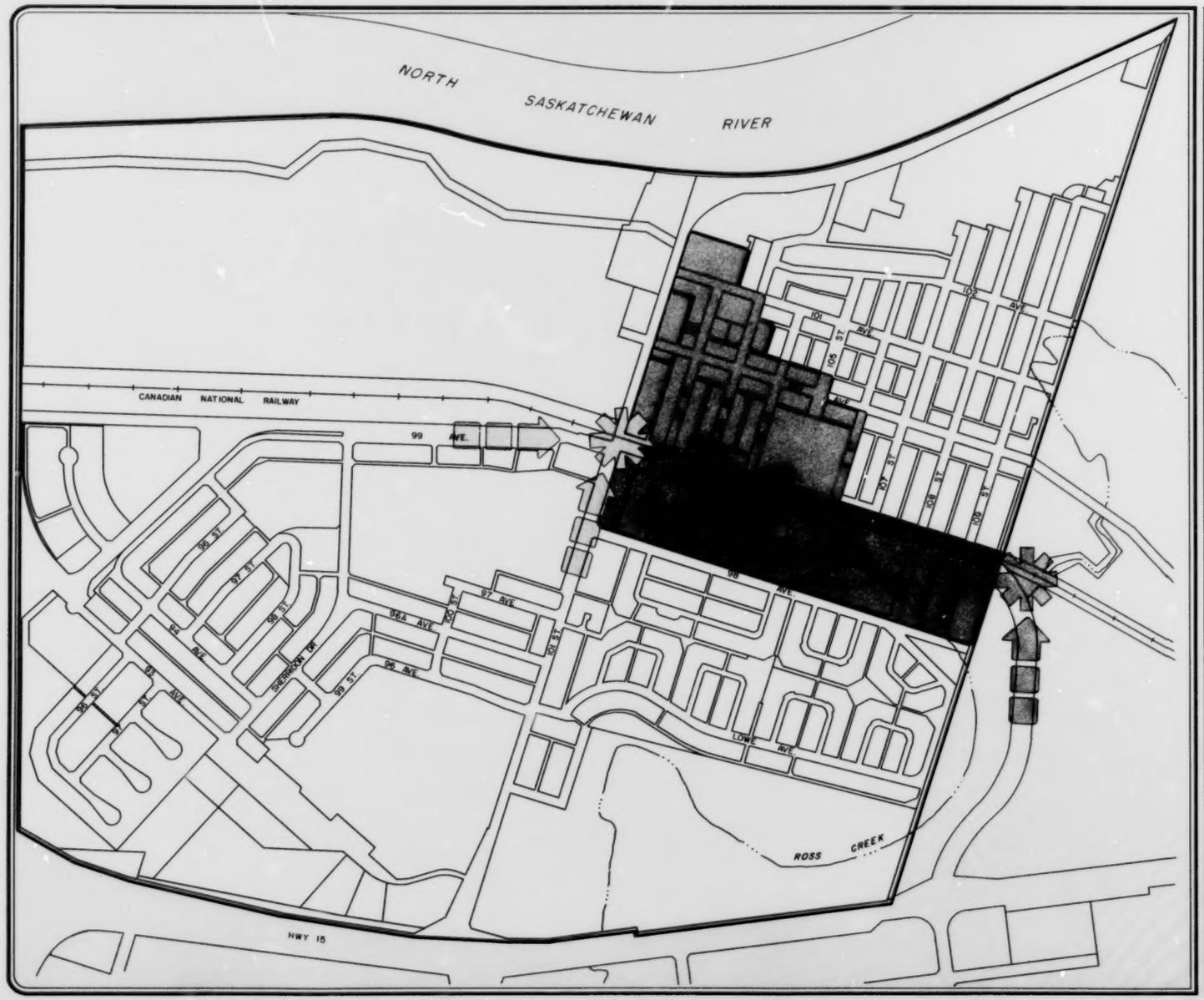
Policy 7: Integration

That the City will undertake and encourage measures intended to physically integrate the city centre areas north and south of 99th Avenue.

PROGRAMS

Program D: Interaction Between the North and South City Centre Areas

That measures to encourage the movement of vehicular and pedestrian traffic across 99th Avenue, between the north and south areas of the city centre, be introduced.



STRUCTURE

FORT SASKATCHEWAN
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- City Centre North
- City Centre South
- Canadian National Railway Right-of-way (To be redesigned)
- City Centre Entrance
- Integration of North/South City Centre Areas
- Major Decision Point for City Centre Traffic

Note: All land use classifications are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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ORDERLY DEVELOPMENT

The city centre area has evolved incrementally along the axis created by the CN rail line and the provincial gaol. With the redevelopment of these two features, it will be essential to ensure that the city centre develops in a logical, orderly and balanced manner. The strategy proposes that a future land use pattern be established to guide and direct development in the city centre. The pattern would allocate commercial, residential and recreational activities so that they support each other functionally, reinforce the special identity of each distinct city centre area and create an ordered retail core that is comprehensible to the shopper, worker and visitor alike.

POLICIES

Policy 8: Orderly Development Pattern

That the City will ensure through the orderly distribution of the different land uses, that the development of the city centre occurs in a harmonious and compatible manner.

Policy 9: Higher Density Core

That the City will encourage high density development within and around the city centre provided the transportation and servicing infrastructure is not overloaded.

Policy 10: Strong Investment Climate

That the City will support and initiate economic and development incentives designed to create a strong investment climate within the city centre.

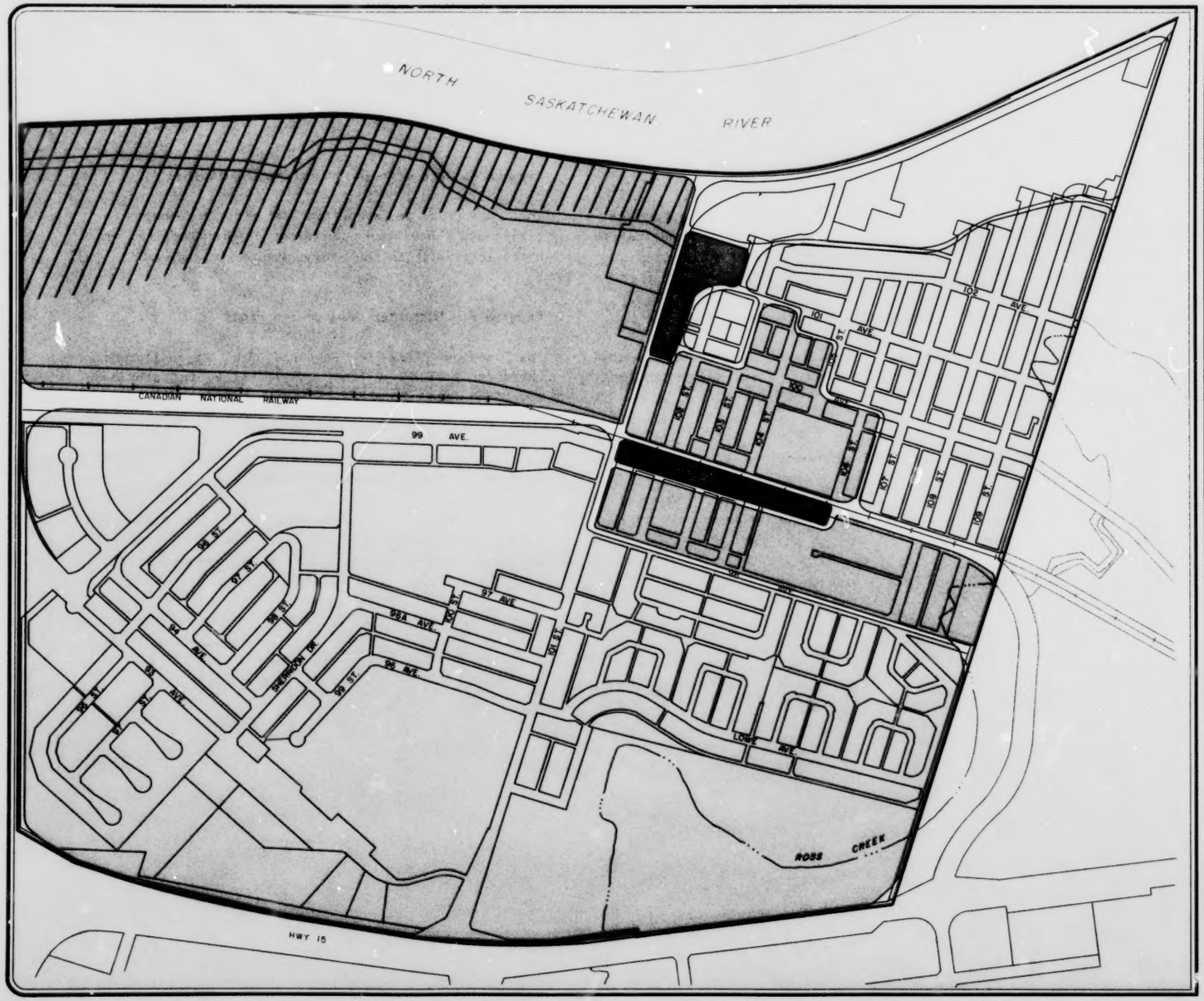
PROGRAMS

Program E: Review City Centre Planning Process

That the regulations, processes and procedures governing the development of land in the city centre be reviewed and improved as necessary.

Program F: Introduce Investment Incentives

That public and private sector investment within the city centre be encouraged through the introduction of economic and development incentives.



DEVELOPMENT

FORT SASKATCHEWAN CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- Low Density Urban
- Medium/High Density Residential
- Retail, Office and Service Commercial
- Vehicle Oriented Commercial
- Institutional, Cultural and Government Services
- Park and Open Space
- Gaol/Railway Properties
- Undevelopable Lands

Note: All land use classifications are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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DISTINCTIVE IDENTITY

The Fort Saskatchewan city centre is attractive and well-maintained and contains several buildings of architectural and historical interest. However, the centre lacks a distinctive identity supported by a central theme and focus. The strategy proposes that two separate theme areas be developed: an historical area, north of 99th Avenue; and a contemporary area, south of 99th Avenue. Measures required include the identification of those historical buildings to be conserved, the introduction of streetscape improvements and architectural controls tailored to each area, and the development of a focal point within the city centre. As well, general improvements to the overall appearance of the retail core would be encouraged and a stronger entrance along 99th Avenue created.

POLICIES

Policy 11: Heritage Conservation

That the City will identify historically and achitecturally significant buildings in the city centre and encourage their retention.

Policy 12: Distinctive Character

That the City will encourage and support the development of distinctive character areas within the city centre.

Policy 13: Quality Environment

That the City will initiate and support measures to improve the quality, design and appearance of the city centre.

PROGRAMS

Program G: Preservation of Heritage Buildings

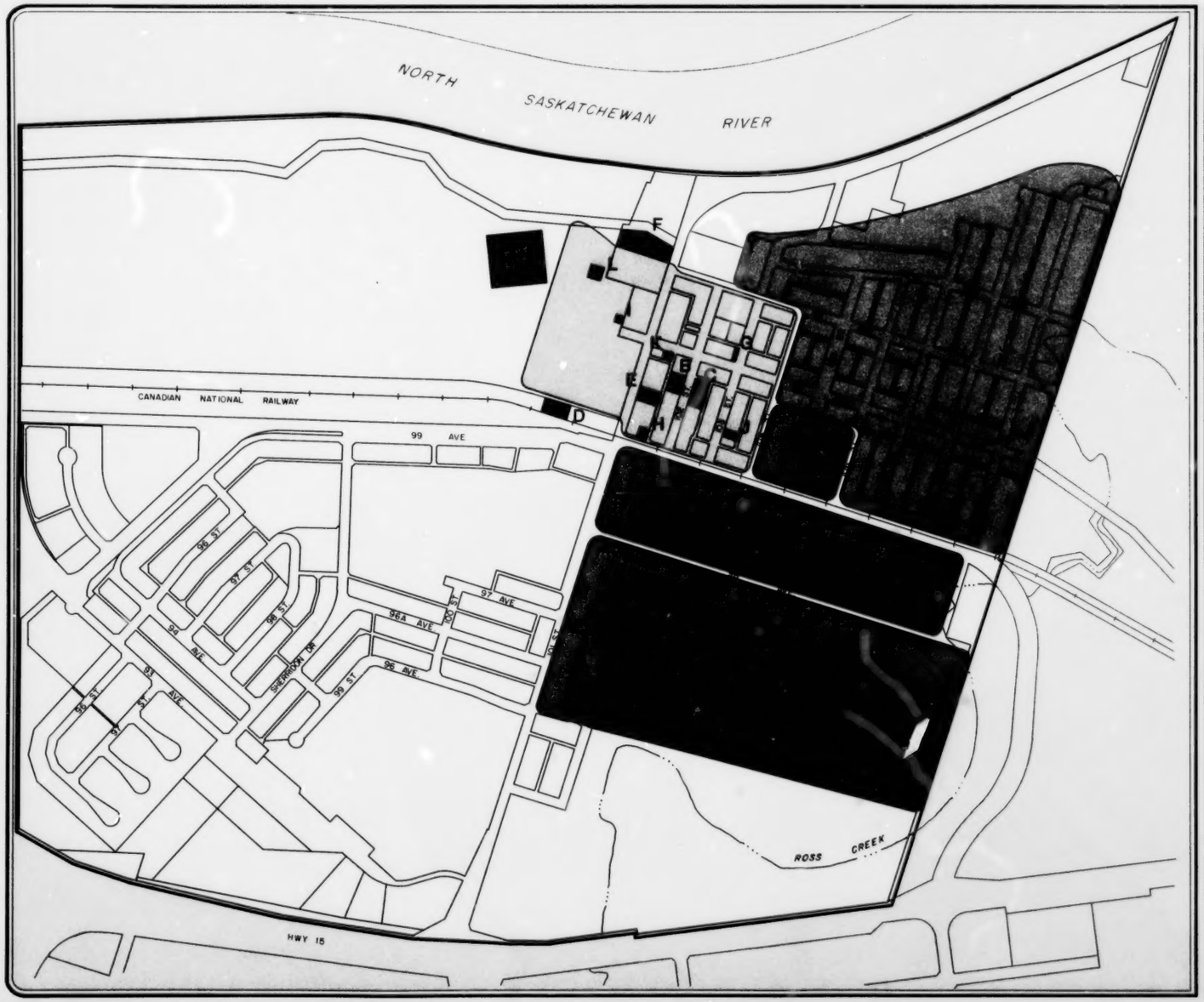
That measures to encourage private landowners to retain and rehabilitate buildings of architectural or historical merit in the city centre be introduced.

Program H: Character Area Design Plans

That design plans be prepared for the different character areas of the city centre to provide direction for future beautification, conservation and improvement actions.

Program I: Civic Government Initiatives

That the City, in co-operation with the business community, investigate ways for each to become actively involved in city centre beautification and revitalization.



IDENTITY

FORT SASKATCHEWAN CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- Residential Character Area
- Historic Character Area
- New Character Area
- Designated Heritage Site [1]
  - A Fort Saskatchewan Northwest Mounted Police Post
- Potential Heritage Conservation Site [2]
  - B Williamson Block
  - C Fort Hotel
  - D Canadian National Railway Station
  - E Masonic Hall
  - F Court House (museum)
  - G Old Firehall/Town Hall
  - H "O" Block (1902, 1907)
  - I Warden's House
  - J Dr. T.W.E. Henry's Home
  - K Post Office
  - L Original Womens Prison Wing

1 Designated under the Historical Resources Act.

2 Other potential heritage conservation sites not shown on the map may exist within the City Centre. For a complete list of such sites, consult the Fort Saskatchewan Historical Society and Alberta Culture.

Note: All land use classifications are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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CONSOLIDATED TRANSPORTATION NETWORK

The Fort Saskatchewan transportation network handles people and goods in a safe, efficient manner. However, two major problems exist. First, the provincial highways do not provide strong links between the commuter routes and the city centre; and, second, the local roadway and walkway systems do not focus on the retail core. The strategy proposes that transportation improvements be introduced to integrate the city centre with the balance of the community. These proposed improvements include upgrading of roadways (widening, rerouting), improved pedestrian routes (walkways, bicycle paths), increased parking space (public parking lots) and the introduction of public transit. The overall intent would be to improve the city centre's accessibility to visitors and residents.

POLICIES

Policy 14: Consolidated Transportation Network

That the City, through the transportation network, will integrate the city centre with suburban residential neighbourhoods, major employment sectors, park and open space systems and recreation and activity centres.

Policy 15: Traffic Circulation

That the City will improve the vehicular and pedestrian traffic system to, from and within the city centre.

Policy 16: Traffic Convenience

That the City will improve parking, signage and pedestrian amenities within the city centre for the convenience of vehicular and foot traffic.

PROGRAMS

Program J: Central Area Transportation Plan

That a comprehensive transportation plan, with an emphasis on the retail core, be prepared for the City's central area.

Program K: Access Improvement

That improvements to the pedestrian and vehicular access routes to the city centre be introduced, to strengthen the relationship between the retail core and the residential and employment sectors of the community.

Program L: Circulation Improvement

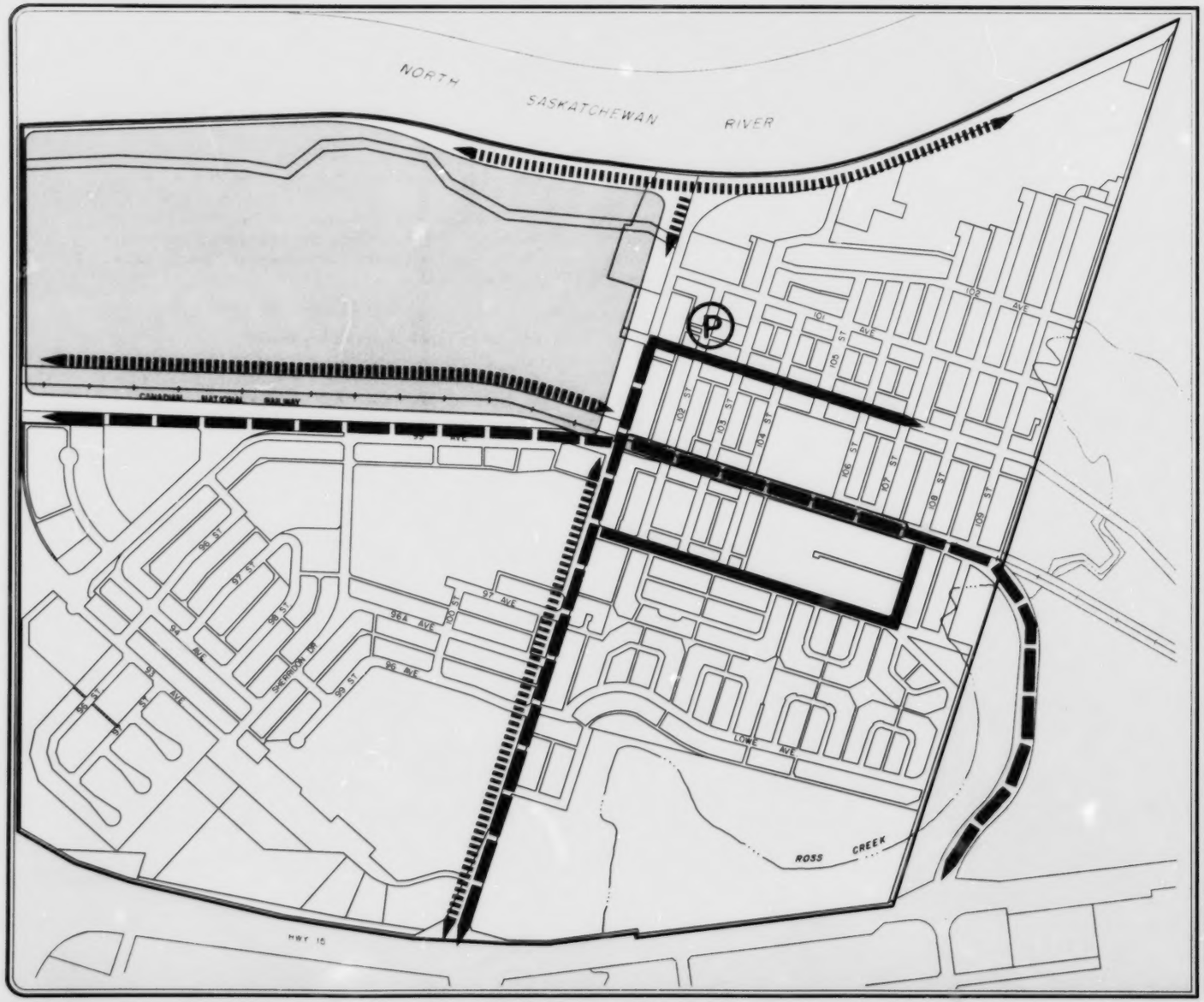
That improvements to the pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow pattern within the city centre be introduced to create an efficient and convenient circulation pattern.

Program M: Parking Improvement

That parking in the city centre, particularly north of 99th Avenue, be continuously monitored and the necessary controls and facilities be introduced.

Program N: Encourage Pedestrian Traffic

That measures to encourage 'foot traffic' within the city centre on a year-round basis be initiated.



MOVEMENT

FORT SASKATCHEWAN
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- Future Transportation Design [1]
- Major City Centre Throughfares
- Future Widening
- Future Pedestrian Linkage
- (P) Area of Future Public Parking Lot

1 Pedestrian/vehicular transportation network for the Provincial Gaol and Canadian National Railway properties to be determined at the detailed planning level.

Note: All future vehicular/pedestrian transportation routes are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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IMPROVED SERVICING

The utility infrastructure (sewage collection, water distribution, stormwater management) is presently adequate for existing development levels in the city centre. However, the water distribution system does have deficiencies relating to its capacity and pressure for firefighting. These deficiencies could affect the density and development pattern of the retail core in the future. The strategy proposes that improvements to the water distribution system be undertaken over the long term, together with any necessary upgrading of the sewer and stormwater systems. This will require an on-going monitoring of servicing demand to determine the point at which development levels require a major capital investment in utility infrastructure. A servicing program would need to be initiated to determine costs, timing and staging of improvements.

POLICIES

Policy 17: Servicing Impact

That the City will require an engineering analysis, showing the impact of a proposed major development project within the city centre on the municipal sewer and water systems, be prepared and submitted by the developer.

Policy 18: Servicing Demand

That the City will monitor the demand for sewer, water and storm drainage services in the city centre to determine when the level of development requires a major investment in utility infrastructure by the City or the private sector.

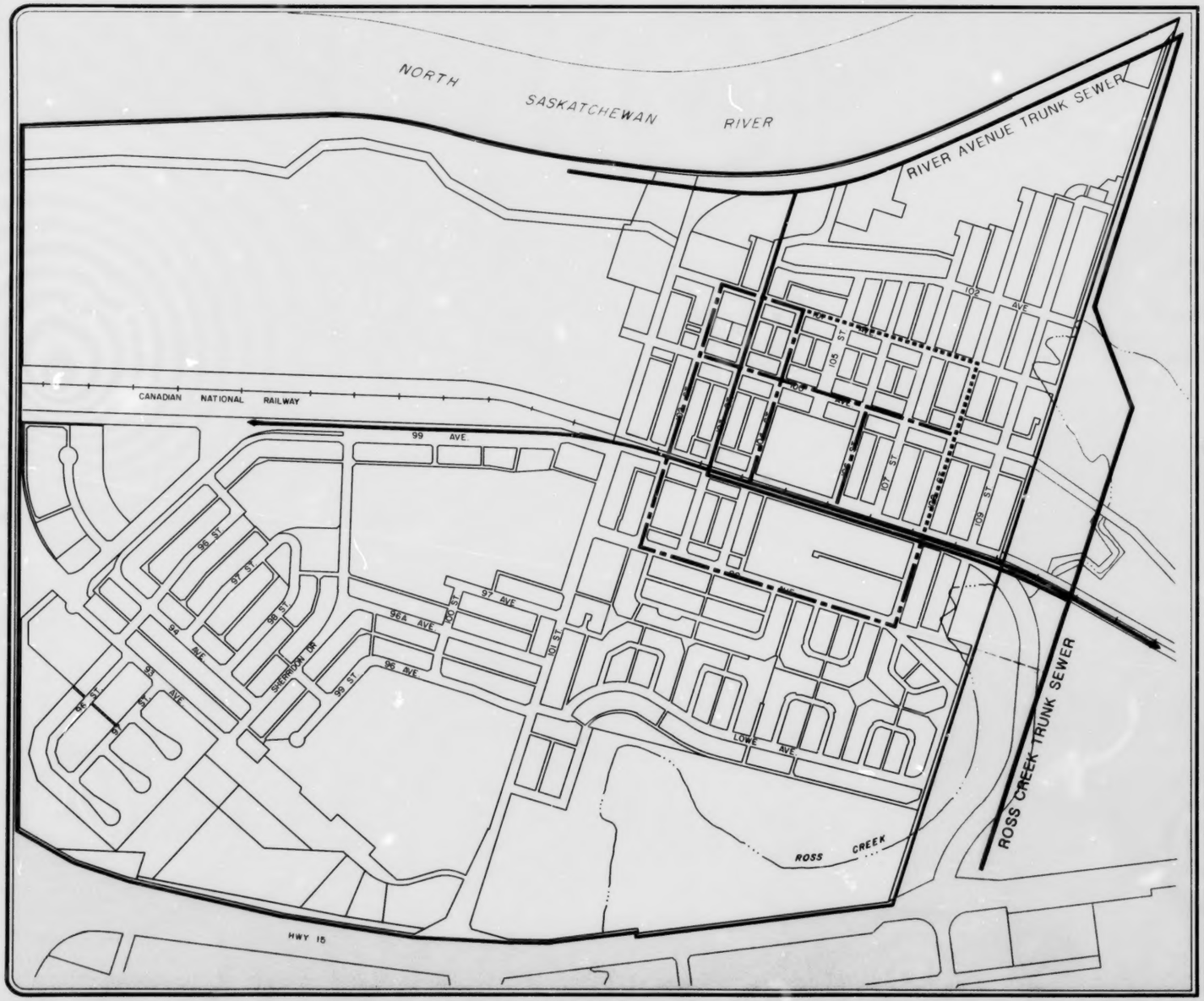
PROGRAMS

Program O: Update Five-Year Servicing Plan

That the five-year servicing plan for the city centre be updated with respect to the timing and financing of utility infrastructure improvements (sewer, water, storm drainage).

Program P: Monitor Servicing Demand

That servicing demand in the city centre be monitored to determine when the level of development requires a major investment in utility infrastructure by the City or private sector.



SERVICING

FORT SASKATCHEWAN
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

— 16 Inch Main Line

-·- 12 Inch Feeder Line with Hydrants

····· 12 Inch Feeder Line Extension

SANITARY SEWAGE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

— Main Sewer Line Upgrading

STORM DRAINAGE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

Storm Drainage Line Upgrading

— Trunk Sewer Line

Source: Associated Engineering Services Ltd. Central Business District Services Study, 1981

Note: All servicing lines are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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COMPREHENSIVE MARKETING

The city centre provides a wide selection of goods and services to an extensive local and regional trading area. However, competition from Edmonton's suburban shopping malls and a general downturn in the provincial economy have challenged Fort Saskatchewan's market share. The strategy proposes that a marketing scheme for the city centre be initiated on three levels. This would involve 'community-wide' marketing, with emphasis on the city centre, through the preparation of an economic development plan; 'city centre' marketing through a regional and local promotional campaign (e.g. 'Shop the Fort'); and private merchandising initiatives to improve customer service and product selection.

POLICIES

Policy 19: Economic Planning

That the City will formulate a community economic strategy, in which city centre development will be a major component, and will actively engage in economic planning.

Policy 20: City Centre Marketing

That the City will support and assist the business community, where possible and practical, in the formulation and implementation of a city-wide marketing campaign, with emphasis on the city centre.

Policy 21: Business Marketing

That the City will support and assist the individual city centre merchants, where possible and practical, in promoting established local businesses.

PROGRAMS

Program Q: Economic Development Plan

That an Economic Development Plan be prepared for Fort Saskatchewan which contains an overall strategy for attracting business investment to the community, including the city centre.

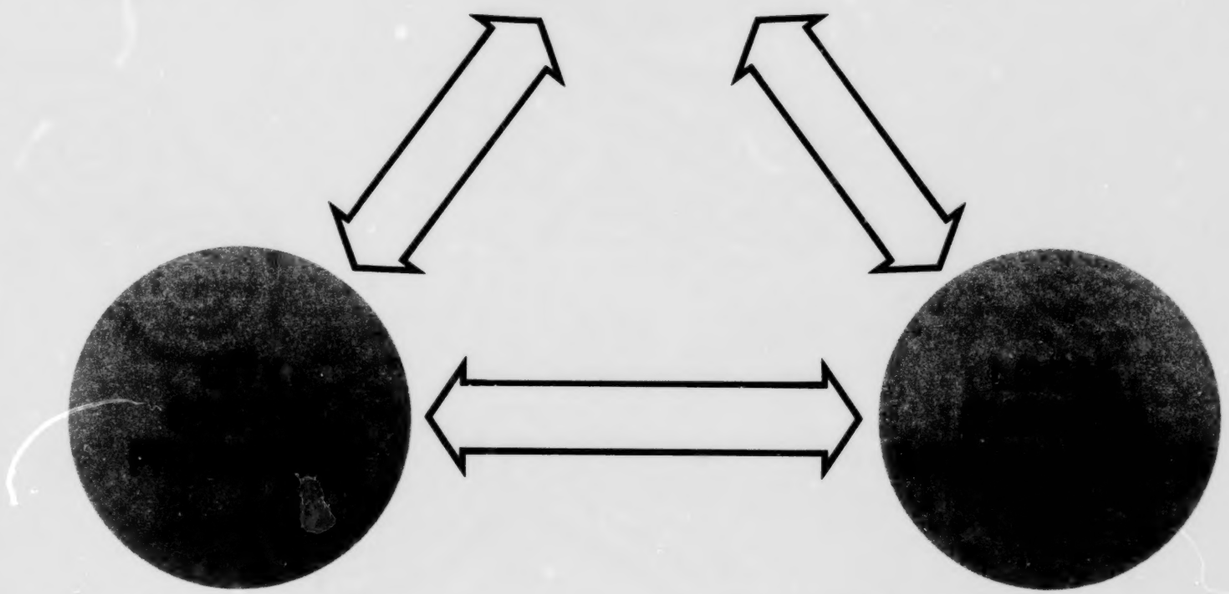
Program R: City Centre Marketing Campaign

That a marketing campaign be developed and implemented to promote the city centre locally and regionally.

Program S: Merchandising

That the city centre merchants be kept informed of the grants and programs available through senior government agencies, and that merchandising workshops and seminars be conducted to assist the local businessman.

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



MARKETING

FORT SASKATCHEWAN
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

Community Economic Development
Marketing the Community and the City Centre to Attract New Business Investment
(Eg. Communicating to target markets, developing high profile public relations, improving the investment climate)

- **City Centre Promotion**
  Marketing the City Centre to Increase Regional Market Share and Expand the Trading Area
  (Eg. Holiday special promotional events, coordinating sales activities, organizing different business interests)
- **Local Business Merchandising**
  Marketing an Individual City Centre Business to Increase that Business' Profit Margin
  (Eg. Increasing product selection, improving levels of service, increasing advertising activities)

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EFFECTIVE ORGANIZATION

A Chamber of Commerce, an independent retailers' association and a shopping mall association are active in the community. In addition, the strategy proposes that a special organizational framework be established to promote, finance and improve the city centre on a co-ordinated and co-operative basis. Two new organizations would need to be formed: a business-municipal partnership organization to develop and market the city centre; and an intergovernmental project management agency to oversee the disposition and redevelopment of the gaol and railway properties.

POLICIES

Policy 22: Municipal Support

That, where possible and practical, the City will provide the business community with continuing assistance, through the Chamber of Commerce, in the organization, financing and management of the city centre.

Policy 23: Business-Municipal Partnership

That the City will co-operate with the business community, through the formation of a common business-municipal partnership organization, to plan, develop and market the city centre.

Policy 24: Intergovernmental Management

That the City will co-operate with the Province in jointly managing the development and disposition of the gaol and railway properties, through the formation of an intergovernmental agency, and enter into other municipal-provincial ventures affecting the city centre.

Policy 25: Business Financing

That the City will co-operate with the business community in the introduction of financial mechanisms to fund city centre improvement projects (e.g. business revitalization zone).

PROGRAMS

Program T: Business Co-operation

That an organizational vehicle be established, through the Chamber of Commerce, to assist the Mall and City Centre Association in the co-operative marketing, financing and management of the City Centre.

Program U: City Centre Development Authority

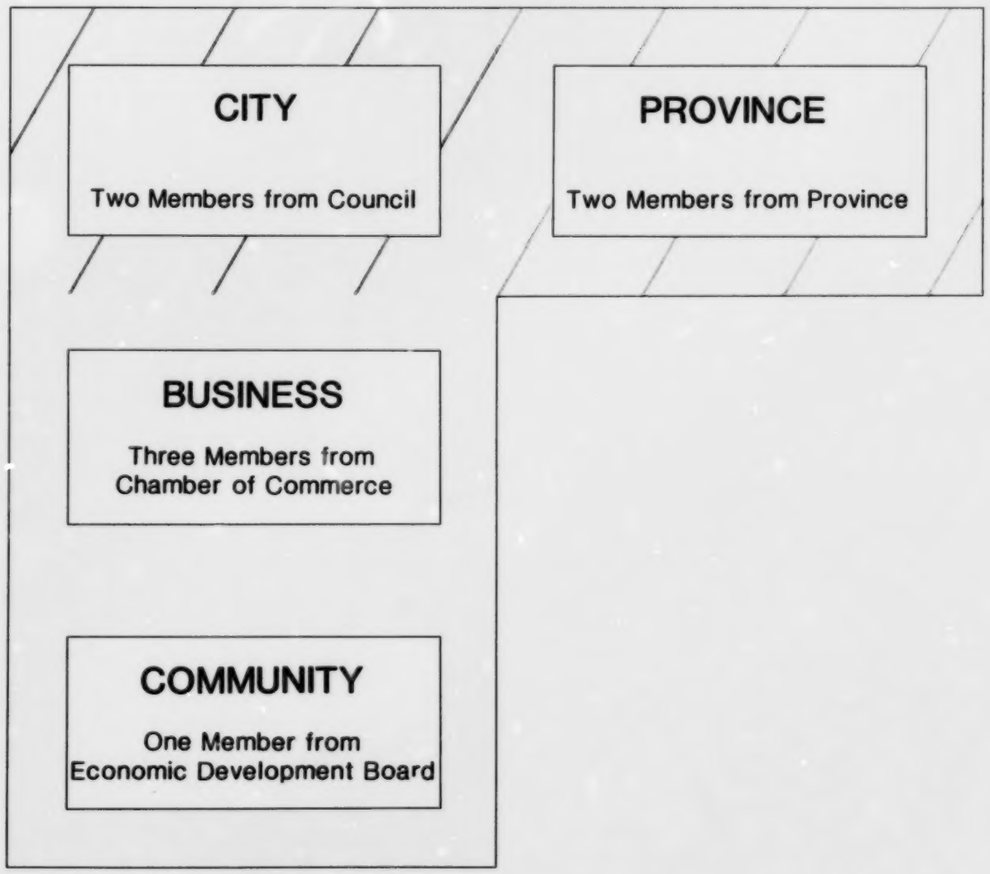
That an organization (City Centre Development Authority), comprised of both municipal and business representatives, be established to be responsible for co-ordinating, initiating and directing city centre development and marketing actions.

Program V: Intergovernmental Project Management Agency

That an organization (Intergovernmental Project Management Agency), comprised of municipal and provincial representatives, be established to manage the disposition and development of the gaol and railway properties, and that Council will consider the allocation of sufficient funds to accomplish this.

Program W: Business Revitalization Zone

That a Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ) be implemented within the city centre and a BRZ Action Plan prepared.



ORGANIZATION

FORT SASKATCHEWAN
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- City Centre Development Authority [1]
- Intergovernmental Project Management Agency [1]

1 For details of membership, refer to Table 3.1 in the plan text

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PROGRESSIVE MANAGEMENT

In many communities, planning strategies have not succeeded because of a lack of commitment by those directly involved, and the failure to provide a clear implementation process for initiating and managing the proposed programs. This strategy proposes the preparation of a detailed 'Action Plan' which sets out schedules, timelines and responsibilities for the suggested programs. The Action Plan would be monitored and revised as necessary, and new programs introduced to replace those which are completed. The result would be an on-going process aimed at improving the physical, economic, social and organizational elements of the city centre.

POLICIES

Policy 26: Implementation

That the City will implement the strategy through an 'Action Plan' of projects and programs, and review progress on a six month basis to identify areas where activities require redirection or improvement.

PROGRAMS

Program X: Project and Program Management

That the programs and projects comprising this City Centre Strategy be implemented by the City Centre Development Authority, the Intergovernmental Project Management Agency and other appropriate public or private interests, in accordance with an Action Plan.

MANAGEMENT

FORT SASKATCHEWAN
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

Strategy Formulation
Development of Planning Strategy for the Fort Saskatchewan City Centre

Organization
Formation of City Centre Development Authority and Intergovernmental Project Management Agency

Implementation
Preparation of Detailed Action Plan for the Implementation of City Centre Strategy Programs

Action
Initiation of Programs and Projects in accordance with the Action Plan

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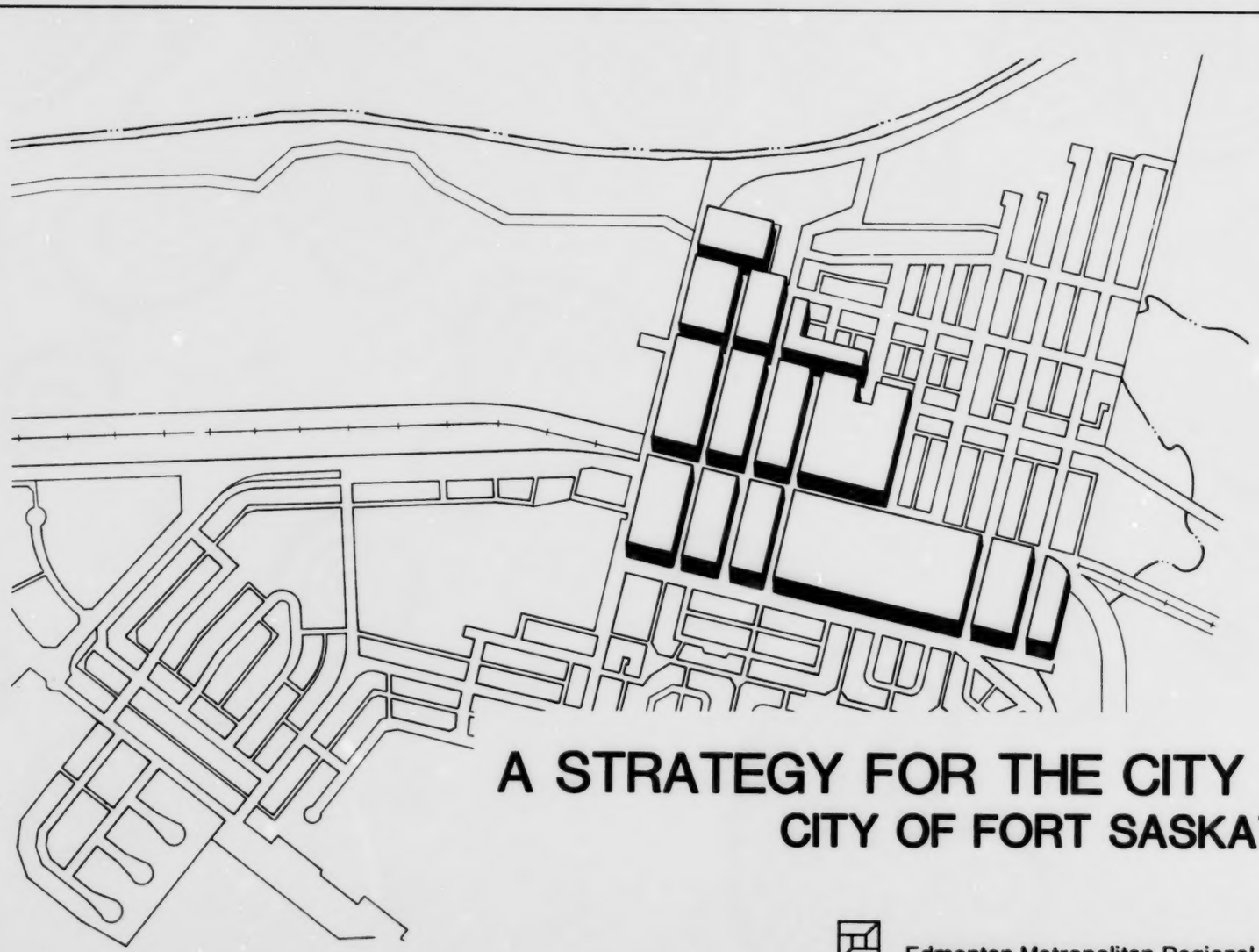

A STRATEGY FOR THE CITY CENTRE
CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

A STRATEGY FOR THE CITY CENTRE
CITY OF FORT SASKATCHEWAN

Prepared by the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

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Ross G. Quinn
CHAIRMAN

R.G. Madziya, M.A., M.C.I.P.
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR

August 1986

Council
City of Fort Saskatchewan

Your Worship and Aldermen

It is my pleasure to submit to you the completed Fort Saskatchewan City Centre Strategy. This document contains both policies and programs designed to address the major planning issues facing the city centre in the 1980s.

The members of our staff who have contributed to the plan wish to express their continued interest in the progress of Fort Saskatchewan. As well, staff gratefully acknowledge the valuable contributions of the members of the City Council, the City Centre Planning Committee and the general public in the preparation of this plan.

I trust that the strategy will serve as a useful document, and assist the Council and the business community in their planning endeavours in the years to come.

Yours truly

R. G. Madziya M.C.I.P.
Executive Director

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document evolved as a result of contributions from many groups and individuals. Special mention is made of the contribution of the members of the City Centre Planning Committee, namely:

Cal Hamilton	Committee Chairman Chamber of Commerce Representative
Jim Drew	Chamber of Commerce Representative
Muriel Abdurahman	Mayor
Gerry Lee	Councillor
Pryce Alderson	Councillor

OTHER CONTRIBUTIONS

The technical work on the plan was undertaken and co-ordinated by the staff of the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission, with Doug Macdonald acting as project planner. Input and assistance was also received from the Fort Saskatchewn administrative staff, namely, Gary Hudson, Development Officer, and Michelle Bohachyk, Recording Secretary. Specialized planning advice on the policies and programs contained in the plan was obtained from Jack Sklofsky, President, C.P.M. Planning Services Limited.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

Page

Letter of Transmittal
Acknowledgements

PART 1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 OVERVIEW 1

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY 1

1.2 PROCESS 2

1.3 COMPOSITION OF THE STRATEGY 2

1.3.1 Concept, Goals and Objectives 2
1.3.2 Policies 3
1.3.3 Programs 3
1.3.4 Implementation 3

1.4 PLANNING AREA 4

1.4.1 City Centre 4
1.4.2 Central Area 4

Page

PART 2 FUTURE CONCEPT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2.0 INTRODUCTION 7

2.1 FUTURE CONCEPT 7

2.2 GOALS 7

2.3 ISSUES 7

2.4 OBJECTIVES 9

PART 3 CITY CENTRE POLICIES

3.1 ROLE OF THE CITY CENTRE 11

3.2 GROWTH OF THE CITY CENTRE 14

3.3 STRUCTURE OF THE CITY CENTRE 16

3.4 DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY CENTRE 18

3.5 IDENTITY OF THE CITY CENTRE 21

3.6 MOVEMENT WITHIN THE CITY CENTRE 25

3.7 SERVICING OF THE CITY CENTRE 28

3.8 MARKETING OF THE CITY CENTRE 30

3.9 ORGANIZATION OF THE CITY CENTRE 33

3.10 MANAGEMENT OF THE CITY CENTRE 37

TABLE OF CONTENTS, continued

Page

PART 4 CITY CENTRE PROGRAMS

4.1 PROGRAMS TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF THE CITY CENTRE 39

4.2 PROGRAMS TO GUIDE THE FUTURE GROWTH OF THE CITY CENTRE 39

4.3 PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE THE STRUCTURE OF THE CITY CENTRE 41

4.4 PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS WITHIN THE CITY CENTRE 42

4.5 PROGRAMS TO CREATE A STRONG IDENTITY FOR THE CITY CENTRE 44

4.6 PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE MOVEMENT INTO AND WITHIN THE CITY CENTRE 46

4.7 PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE THE SERVICING OF THE CITY CENTRE 49

4.8 PROGRAMS TO MARKET THE CITY CENTRE 50

4.9 PROGRAMS FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND FINANCING OF THE CITY CENTRE 52

4.10 PROGRAMS TO MANAGE THE CITY CENTRE 55

LIST OF MAPS

Page

PLANNING AREA 5

CITY CENTRE ROLE 13

CITY CENTRE GROWTH 15

CITY CENTRE STRUCTURE 17

CITY CENTRE DEVELOPMENT 19

CITY CENTRE IDENTITY 23

CITY CENTRE MOVEMENT 27

CITY CENTRE SERVICING 29

CITY CENTRE MARKETING 31

CITY CENTRE ORGANIZATION 35

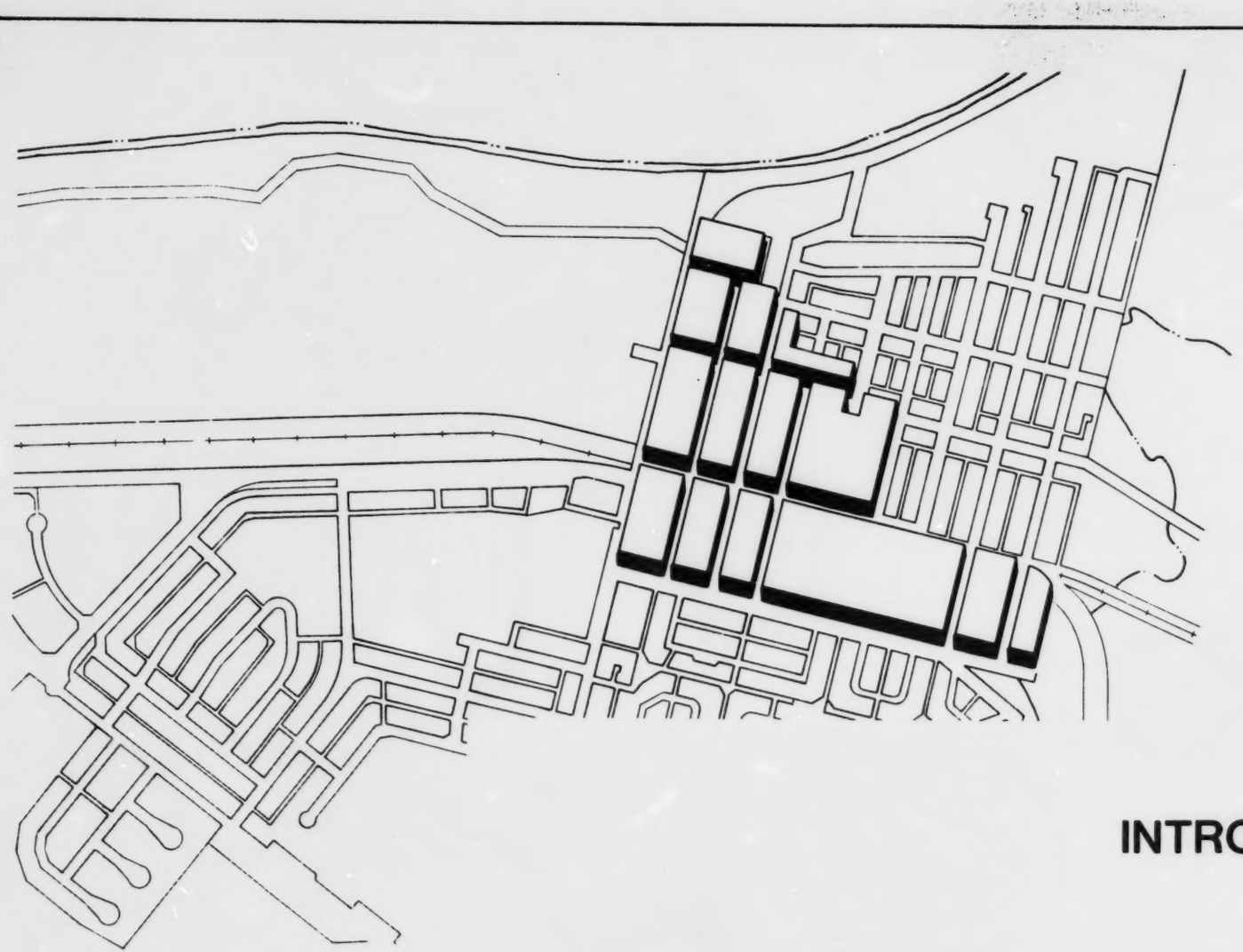
CITY CENTRE MANAGEMENT 38

"Downtown is one of the most powerful urban images, the location of our proudest achievements in city-building. The planning words used to describe success in the downtown environment - central business district, activity centre, mixed use, focus, node - are technical labels for the simple truth that a community that is interesting, stimulating and worth living in needs a strong heart."

J. Wollenberg and S. McLaughlin
How Now Downtown?

"And even when Main Street lacked uniformity, it was being most true to itself. It was the central axis of the town's grid pattern, the main artery through which the lifeblood of the town flowed - its commerce, its parades, its ceremonies. Its people met, talked, shopped along it. It was totally pragmatic in design, its character dictated by no prince or patron or philosopher-king architect; it was, in other words, democratic, reflecting the free play of the marketplace, a hundred decisions of individual entrepreneurs."

Richard Lingeman
Small Town America



PART 1
INTRODUCTION

1.0 OVERVIEW

The Fort Saskatchewan retail centre has undergone an interesting and colorful evolution from its beginning in the late 1800s. The establishment of a Northwest Mounted Police fort in 1874 on the banks of the North Saskatchewan River attracted several businesses serving the surrounding agricultural community. By 1893, the retail centre contained two general stores, a telegraph office, a post office, a real estate firm, an insurance agency, a lumber yard, a barber shop, a harness shop and a billiard hall.

The railway, built in 1905, attracted more settlers into the area and further stimulated the retail and service sector so that, by 1911, the community of 1,000 persons could boast of a commercial core containing forty-nine flourishing businesses, including first class hotels. Although this core did not grow as rapidly during the depression and second world war era, it continued to maintain its role as the primary trading centre for an agricultural area stretching many miles to the north and east of Edmonton.

In 1951, the retail core comprised a two to three block area north of the Canadian National Railway main line. However, by 1954, the year Sherritt Gordon Mines commenced operations, a lumber yard and several service stations had established south of the tracks.

Today, the city centre occupies about fourteen blocks of land and straddles the CN rail line. Commercial development is located in about equal proportions north and south of the tracks. Over one hundred and eighty businesses presently serve a trading area which includes local residents, the surrounding agricultural population, several smaller communities and an expanding industrial sector located in the northeast part of the Edmonton metropolitan region.

Despite a strong local and regional trading area, the downturn in the economy and increased competition from Edmonton's suburban shopping malls and major discount food stores have posed a major challenge to the strength and vitality of Fort Saskatchewan's city centre. To meet this challenge, an overall strategy has been prepared for the future planning and development of the city centre. The strategy is contained in this document.

1.1 PURPOSE OF THE STRATEGY

A city centre results from many decisions made over time by the important people who control its destiny. These people are the elected officials, businessmen, civic leaders and influential citizens in the community. No decision by itself is likely to have a critical impact on the health of the city centre; however, in total, these decisions will decide the future success or failure of that city centre. Thus, it is essential that an overall strategy be formulated to ensure that future decisions and actions achieve the best result possible.

The purpose of this strategy can be stated as follows:

(1) to determine goals, identify issues and set objectives for the Fort Saskatchewan city centre;

(2) to create a policy framework to guide public decisions affecting the Fort Saskatchewan city centre; and

(3) to establish programs designed to resolve the major problems facing the Fort Saskatchewan city centre.

1.2 PROCESS

The preparation of this strategy was initiated in 1984 by the City Council through a request for assistance to the Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission. In addition, the City received advice from CPM Planning Services Limited, which provided input during the policy and program formulation stage.

In recognition of the need for input from the diverse interests in the City, a planning committee was formed consisting of representatives from the Council and Chamber of Commerce. The regular meetings held by the City Centre Planning Committee enabled Committee members, in conjunction with planning and technical consultants, to identify issues, define objectives and establish policies and programs.

The Committee was assisted by the results of a business survey, conducted and completed over a three month period. During December, 1984, business survey questionnaires were distributed to every operating commercial enterprise in the city centre. The 69 percent of the questionnaires completed and returned represented a broad cross section of all major types of businesses in the city centre. The results of the survey were made available to the business community and the Council, and form the basis for many of the policies and programs presented in this document.

Prior to final acceptance of the plan, both a public information meeting and a formal public hearing were held. During this time members of the business community and public-at-large were invited to ask questions and express their views to the Committee members. As a result of these meetings some significant changes to the strategy were made. The City Centre Strategy was then adopted by the City Council in April, 1986, and copies were made available shortly thereafter to the public for information and review.

1.3 COMPOSITION OF THE STRATEGY

The city centre strategy is comprised of four components.

1.3.1 Concept, Goals and Objectives

The first step in the development of the strategy was the determination of a future concept, the identification of goals and the setting of objectives. To derive the concept, the physical, social, economic and political factors influencing the city centre were examined and assumptions about the future were made. The concept combined community aspirations with hard realities in an attempt to be both forward looking and relevant.

The goals represent a refinement of the concept through positive statements of intent about the future. The goals are long term, and express the desired conditions and ultimate accomplishments of the City.

Objectives are concise, performance-oriented statements of what is to be attained relative to an issue (problem, need, opportunity). Objectives translate the perceived issues into positive aims, toward which planning efforts are to be directed.

1.3.2 Policies

A key ingredient in city centre planning lies in the domain of public decision-making. The strategy, therefore, contains broadly worded 'statements of policy' which are intended to direct the City's decision-makers in their resolution of a particular issue and their achievement of an objective. The policies represent guidelines designed to encourage those changes and refinements that are inevitable at the more detailed level of planning. Typically, the policies address the physical development of the city centre (land use, transportation, servicing, historical preservation, architectural design) but also have immediate economic implications.

1.3.3 Programs

City centre vitalization is not a static process but one involving continuous action by many different groups and individuals. The strategy, therefore, contains programs designed to be implemented over time in response to the city centre's problems. The programs describe a 'course of action' to be followed and are meant to be continuously monitored and revised in response to changing situations. Typically, the programs deal with the economic development of the city centre (organization, financing, management, promotion).

1.3.4 Implementation

The implementation of policies and programs involves participants from both the public and private sectors. If the strategy is to proceed on a comprehensive and co-ordinated basis, it is necessary to set priorities, delegate responsibilities and determine time lines for completion. To address this, a series of detailed 'action plans' will be prepared. These action plans would contain an implementation process for the programs and be subject to continuous review and revision in response to changing priorities and demands.

1.4 PLANNING AREA

As delineated on the following map, the planning area consists of two distinct sub-areas within the City: the city centre and the central area. These sub-areas are described as follows:

1.4.1 City Centre

The city centre comprises that area containing higher density residential, commercial and institutional development located along both sides of the Canadian National Railway line, as shown on the map. This area comprises the City's retail core and is the subject of detailed study. The majority of the policies and programs contained in this document apply to it.

1.4.2 Central Area[1]

The central area surrounds the city centre and includes the original residential townsite, the North Saskatchewan River Valley, the Provincial Gaol property, the Ross Creek drainage basin and the Sherridon residential neighbourhood. This area is the subject of more selective study and only certain general policies and programs, relating to the city centre, pertain to it.

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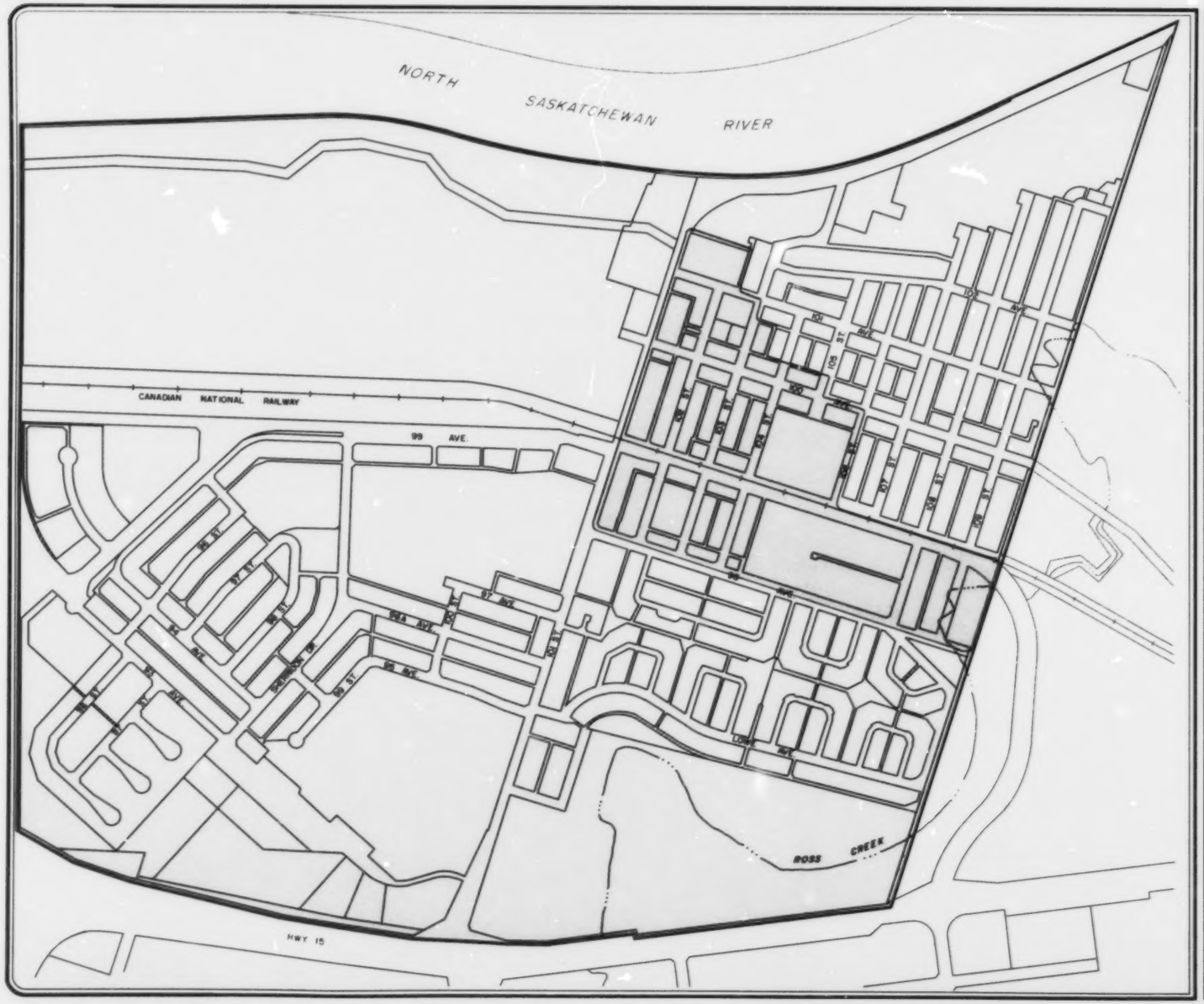
1. The Central Area and the City Centre, together, comprise that area of Fort Saskatchewan for which a Redevelopment Levy is applied through City By-law 1775.



PLANNING AREAS

FORT SASKATCHEWAN
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

PLANNING AREAS

- City Centre
- Central Area

Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

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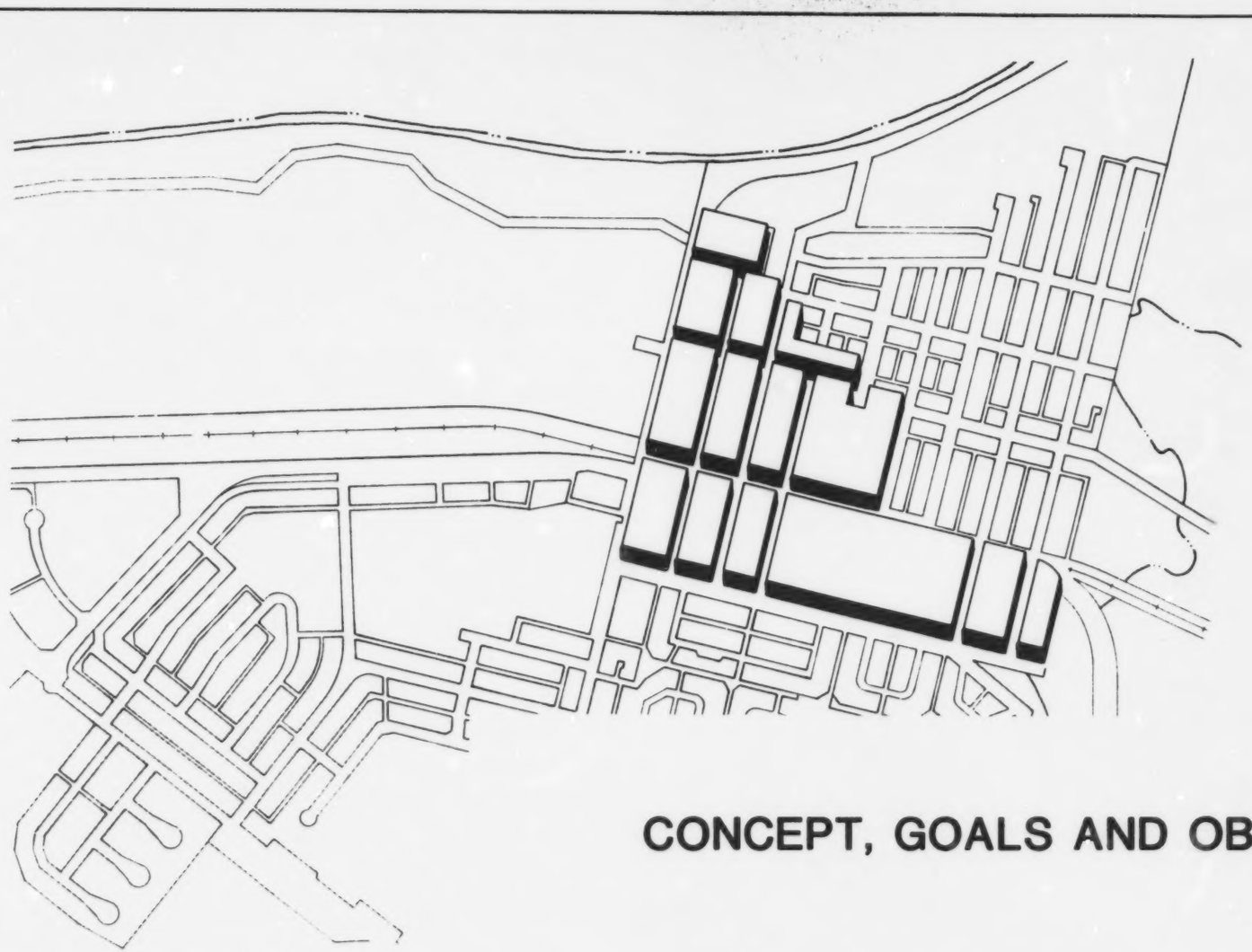


PART 2
CONCEPT, GOALS AND OBJECTIVES

2.0 INTRODUCTION

This part describes the future concept, goals and objectives of the city centre.

2.1 FUTURE CONCEPT

The future concept of the city centre can be stated as follows:

The city centre is the focus of the energy and activity of Fort Saskatchewan, performing many diverse yet interrelated functions: it is a major employment centre; it is a place where people go to shop and conduct business; it provides a stimulating living environment; it represents a link with the past through its buildings and architecture; it concentrates social, cultural and recreational activities; and it creates a 'sense of place' for the community.

These multiple roles will be maintained and strengthened in the future, although this will require enthusiasm, participation and commitment on the part of businessmen, investors, civic leaders and citizens. Through sound management and development practices, it is anticipated that the city centre will continue to serve a strong and expanding market in the metropolitan region; remain a place to shop, live and work; and reflect the heritage and prosperity of Fort Saskatchewan.

2.2 GOALS

Based on this future concept, the following three goals for the city centre have been identified.

A Multi-faceted Centre

To develop the city centre as a 'multi-faceted centre' - a vibrant and exciting place for people.

Our Place in History

To develop the city centre as a 'show place' - a tribute to the community's proud past and a beacon for the future.

The Bold Marketplace

To develop the city centre as the 'bold market place' - a focus for continuing business investment and economic growth.

2.3 ISSUES

The main issues facing the city centre are summarized in the following table.

CITY CENTRE ISSUES

ROLE	GROWTH	STRUCTURE	DEVELOPMENT	IDENTITY
The city centre remains the business, social and cultural focus of the community. However, peripheral commercial development in outlying areas (business parks, highway commercial strips, community shopping centres) is likely to increase as the community grows and this could place a strain on the city centre's traditional role.	The city centre is bounded by several man-made and natural features (river valley, creek drainage basin, gaol property, established residential areas). The direction and extent of future city centre expansion is unclear and some conflicts have arisen at the commercial-residential interface.	The city centre is concentrated within a twelve block area. However, the Canadian National Railway line and 99th Avenue divide the city centre into two physically separate and competing commercial areas north and south of the tracks. This physical separation creates transportation, land use and organizational problems, and impedes the development of a cohesive retail core.	The Fort Saskatchewan city centre has evolved in a logical manner along the axis created by the provincial gaol lands and the railway line. However, the pending redevelopment of these two features and the steady growth of housing, retail and multi-use facilities emphasize the need to clarify the development pattern of the city centre and to relate the different land use areas functionally to each other.	The appearance, architecture and streetscape of the downtown is attractive and well-maintained. However, the city centre lacks a distinctive identity, supported by a coherent theme and a central focus, designed to attract tourists, shoppers and business investment to the community.
MOVEMENT	**SERVICING**	**MARKETING**	**ORGANIZATION**	**MANAGEMENT**
The transportation network for the city centre handles people and goods in a safe and efficient manner. However, the network does not efficiently integrate the city centre with the balance of the community and does not promote a 'people-oriented' retail core.	The utility infrestructure in the city centre is adequate to service existing development. However, the water distribution system has potential deficiencies relating to volume and pressure for fire-fighting purposes. These deficiencies could affect the future density and development pattern of the city centre.	The city centre provides a wide selection of goods and services to a strong local and regional trading area. However, the community's proximity to Edmonton inhibits the economic growth of the city centre and its ability to attract new business investment.	An active Chamber of Commerce, Mall Association and City Centre Association exist, with each representing different business interests. However, the community and merchant groups lack a unified organizational structure to finance and promote the city centre on a comprehensive and co-operative basis.	The community contains enthusiastic groups and individuals dedicated to the promotion and revitalization of the city centre. However, a management mechanism is lacking to ensure that funds are allocated and applied in the best manner, projects are planned and administered on a co-ordinated basis and public and private sector co-operation occurs.

2.4 OBJECTIVES

Based on the foregoing issues, the following objectives have been defined.

Role

To maintain the city centre as the focus of business, social, cultural and passive recreational activity in the community.

Growth

To accommodate future city centre expansion in a logical, concentrated and comprehensively planned manner.

Structure

To integrate the physically and functionally separate areas of the city centre to achieve a cohesive retail core.

Development

To create an orderly and harmonious pattern of land development within the city centre.

Identity

To enhance the special character of the city centre to achieve a people-oriented and visually attractive living, shopping and working environment.

Movement

To ensure the safe and efficient movement of people, goods and vehicles into, out of and through the city centre.

Servicing

To provide adequate sewer, water and storm drainage servicing for the city centre to meet the needs of present and future development.

Marketing

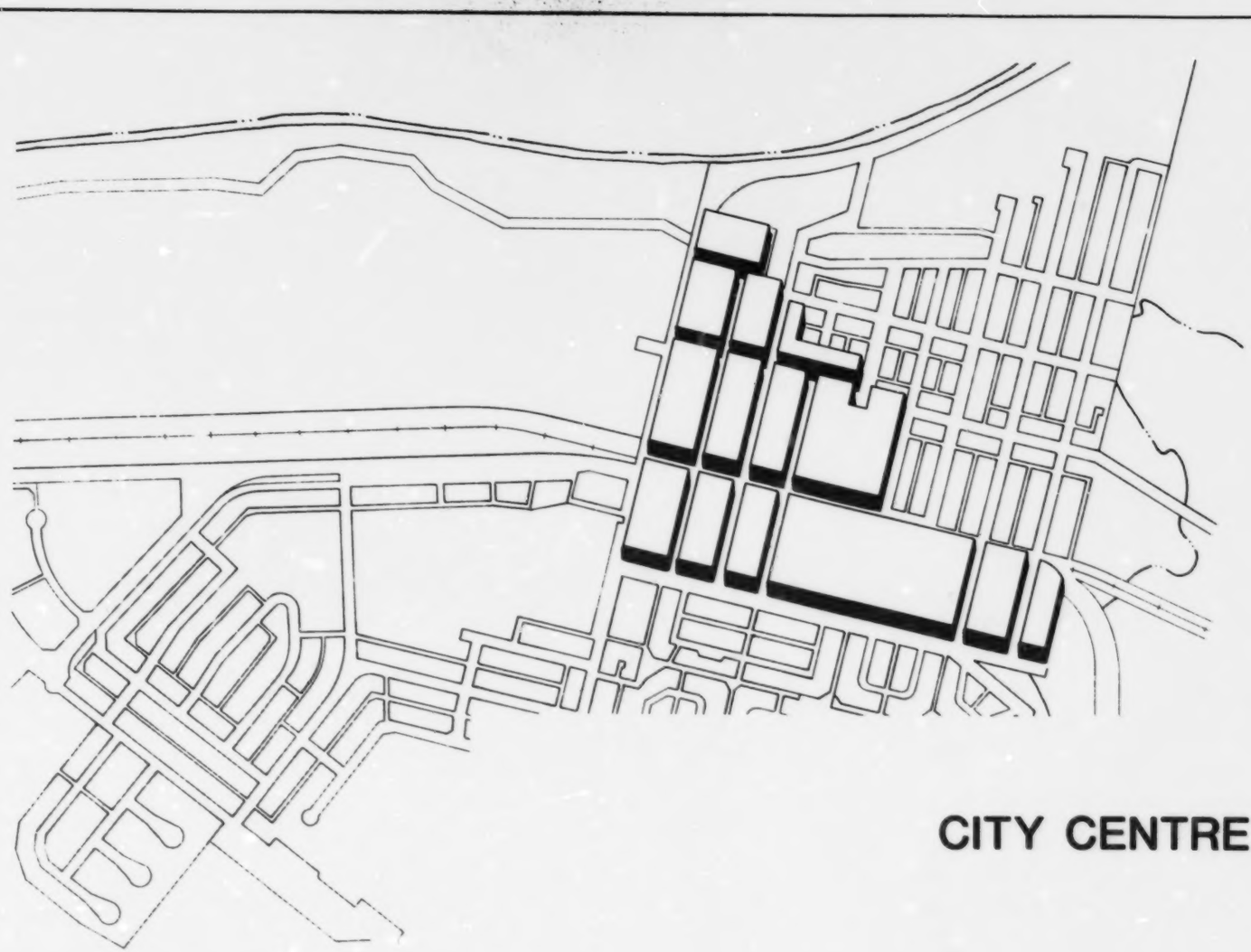
To promote the city centre and its business sector through an effective marketing program.

Organization

To organize and co-ordinate the diverse public and private interests within the city centre.

Management

To achieve the best result possible in the city centre through the efficient management of people and resources.



PART 3
CITY CENTRE POLICIES

3.1 ROLE OF THE CITY CENTRE

The Fort Saskatchewan city centre has traditionally served as the business focus of the community, attracting office, service and retail commercial activities. With continued City growth, however, there will be increasing pressure to decentralize as new and existing businesses seek alternative locations outside the city centre. If the role of the city centre is to be maintained, decentralization should occur in a logical and controlled manner. At the same time, it must be recognized that not all business will locate in the retail core. Many businesses have unique and varied locational requirements which preclude a central site; and, if locational choice is not provided, potential businesses may look to other communities. Therefore, the City intends to preserve and strengthen the city centre's traditional role by encouraging a variety of compatible commercial, residential and institutional development to locate there, but allowing a select range of commercial activities to situate in defined areas outside the city centre.

CONCEPT MAP

The Role Map illustrates the following areas of future commercial development in the City:

(a) the existing city centre;

(b) the existing and future industrial and business parks;

(c) the future business and commercial strips along the highway;

(d) the existing neighbourhood convenience shopping centre; and

(e) a future community shopping centre site.

POLICIES

The following policies are intended to guide decisions concerning the distribution of commercial development in the City.

Policy 1: Multi-Faceted City Centre

That the City will encourage and promote the location of a diverse variety of compatible commercial development within the city centre, as well as higher density housing, public and private institutional uses and community and recreational facilities.

The type of commercial, residential, institutional and recreational development that would be encouraged to situate in the city centre includes:

(a) retail and service commercial activities (e.g. major retail stores);

(b) multiple family housing projects (e.g. walk-up apartments, rowhousing, residential dwellings above ground level commercial establishments, high rise apartments, etc.);

(c) government owned and subsidized housing projects (e.g. nursing homes, senior citizen homes, etc.);

(d) civic offices, services and facilities (e.g. administrative offices).

Policy 2: Community Shopping Focus

That the City will maintain the city centre as the shopping focus of the community.

The city centre will remain the centre of concentrated retail, office and service activity in the community.

Through effective planning and marketing the city centre will be strengthened to enable it to compete successfully with other city centres in the metropolitan region and the other business sectors within Fort Saskatchewan. That is to say, a vital and viable retail core will be maintained.

Policy 3: Selective Decentralization

That the City will allow selected types of commercial development to locate in defined areas outside the city centre (i.e. highway commercial strips, business and industrial parks, neighbourhood shopping centres, community shopping centre).

Commercial development locating outside the city centre would be:

(a) evaluated on a site specific basis, with regard to its impact on the city centre and its benefit for the community; and

(b) of a type and scale not normally found in the city centre area.

The City may allow a community or regional shopping centre to locate outside the city centre where that shopping centre would be:

(a) of a size and scale that ensures the majority of the total gross leasable area of retail and service commercial space in the City remains within the city centre; and

(b) staged from a smaller scale neighbourhood centre to a larger scale community centre, in response to the population growth of the City and its surrounding trade area.

ROLE

FORT SASKATCHEWAN CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

EXISTING COMMERCIAL AREA

- City Centre
- Neighbourhood Shopping Centre

POTENTIAL COMMERCIAL EXPANSION AREA

- Service Commercial
- Business Park
- Community Shopping Centre

Source: Fort Saskatchewan General Municipal Plan, Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

Southfort Outline Plan, McKenzie Spencer Associates, Planning Consultants

Note: All land use classifications are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

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Not To Scale

3.2 GROWTH OF THE CITY CENTRE

The growth of the Fort Saskatchewan city centre is constrained by several man-made and natural features: the North Saskatchewan River Valley; the Ross Creek Drainage Basin; the Provincial Gaol; and the established residential neighbourhoods to the south and east. Opportunities to accommodate immediate growth exist through the infilling of vacant lots and the redevelopment of under-utilized property. Longer term growth, however, will necessitate expanding into the provincial gaol property, CN railway lands or the Park Elementary School site. Major questions concerning the timing, cost, ownership and design of these three sites are still unanswered, and considerable discussion between the parties involved will be necessary. In view of this situation, the City intends to pursue a 'containment strategy' in which short term development will be concentrated in the existing retail core, and only limited commercial expansion allowed into the surrounding residential neighbourhoods. Long range growth will be accommodated through the redevelopment of the gaol lands, the railway lands and, possibly, the school site.

CONCEPT MAP

The Growth Map designates the following areas:

(a) the existing city centre;

(b) the areas of comprehensively planned future city centre expansion (provincial gaol property, railway relocation lands, elementary school site); and

(c) the areas where city centre expansion would be restricted (river valley, Sherridon residential subdivision, residential neighbourhood immediately east of the city centre).

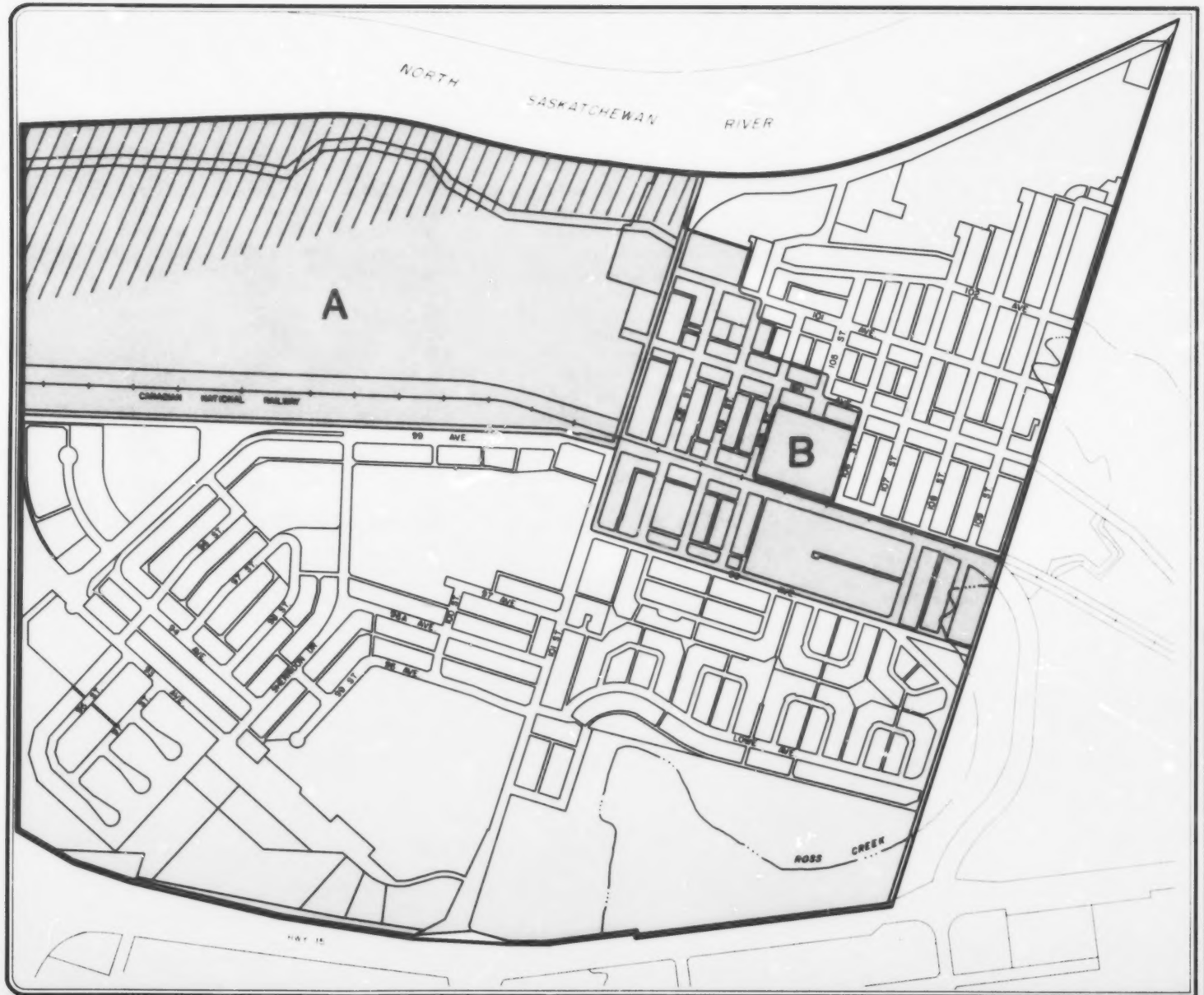
POLICIES

The following policies are intended to guide decisions concerning the rate, location and extent of city centre growth.

Policy 4: Concentrated Core

That the City will direct city centre development in the short term to the vacant and underdeveloped properties within the existing retail core.

The outward expansion of the city centre will be limited in the short term unless it can be demonstrated that new land is required to accommodate a proposed major development project.



GROWTH

FORT SASKATCHEWAN CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- City Centre
- Area of Restricted City Centre Growth
- Area of Future City Centre Growth
- A Gaol/Railway Properties
- B Elementary School Site
- Undevelopable Area (Situated within river valley flood plain)

Note: All land use classifications are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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Policy 5: Protection of Peripheral Residential Neighbourhoods

That the City will protect established residential neighbourhoods on the periphery of the city centre from the premature intrusion of non-compatible higher density development.

Generally, expansion of the city centre will not be allowed south and east of the City Centre area, as indicated on the Growth Map.

Policy 6: Comprehensive Growth

That the City will direct long term city centre expansion to the provincial gaol and railway properties and, possibly, the public school site, and any future development of these areas will occur on a comprehensively planned basis.

The City intends that major city centre expansion will be accommodated on the provincial gaol and railway properties. A detailed design concept, showing future land use patterns, roadway networks and utility servicing systems for these expansion areas, will be prepared prior to their redevelopment.

3.3 STRUCTURE OF THE CITY CENTRE

The Fort Saskatchewan city centre is made up of two distinct areas north and south of 99th Avenue. The north part, comprising the City's historical retail core, contains numerous independent businesses, civic administration offices and public services, and senior citizen and apartment complexes. The south part, a more recently developed commercial area, contains a large shopping mall, multi-tenant office and retail buildings, automobile-oriented services and a number of vacant properties suitable for retail expansion. Although the north and south areas form a large, definable business district, their physical separation creates planning, transportation and organizational problems. It is the intent of the City, therefore, to integrate these two areas through roadway and urban design improvements, with the eventual aim of achieving a cohesive retail core.

CONCEPT MAP

The Structure Map illustrates the following features:

(a) the north and south business areas which comprise the city centre;

(b) the CN railway right-of-way and 99th Avenue which divide the city centre into two areas; and

(c) the main entrance points to the city centre (the junction of 101st Street and 99th Avenue, the junction of 109th Street and 99th Avenue).

STRUCTURE

FORT SASKATCHEWAN
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- City Centre North
- City Centre South
- Canadian National Railway Right-of-way (To be redesigned)
- City Centre Entrance
- Integration of North/South City Centre Areas
- Major Decision Point for City Centre Traffic

Note: All land use classifications are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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POLICIES

The following policy is intended to guide decisions concerning the structure of the city centre.

Policy 7: Integration

That the City will undertake and encourage measures intended to physically integrate the city centre areas north and south of 99th Avenue.

Such measures may include:

(a) Following the relocation of the CN rail line, a redesign of the railway right-of-way area to create a roadway pattern that links the north and south areas and diminishes the perceived barrier that exists for motorists and pedestrians.

(b) The placement of information signs at city centre entrance points to indicate clearly the commercial areas north and south of 99th Avenue and highlight points of interest in the city centre area as a whole.

(c) The provision of well-marked crosswalks, and the strategic placement and synchronization of traffic control devices to allow pedestrians ready access between the north and south areas.

(d) The realignment of roadways and turning lanes to provide vehicular traffic with easy access to either the north or south area from 99th Avenue.

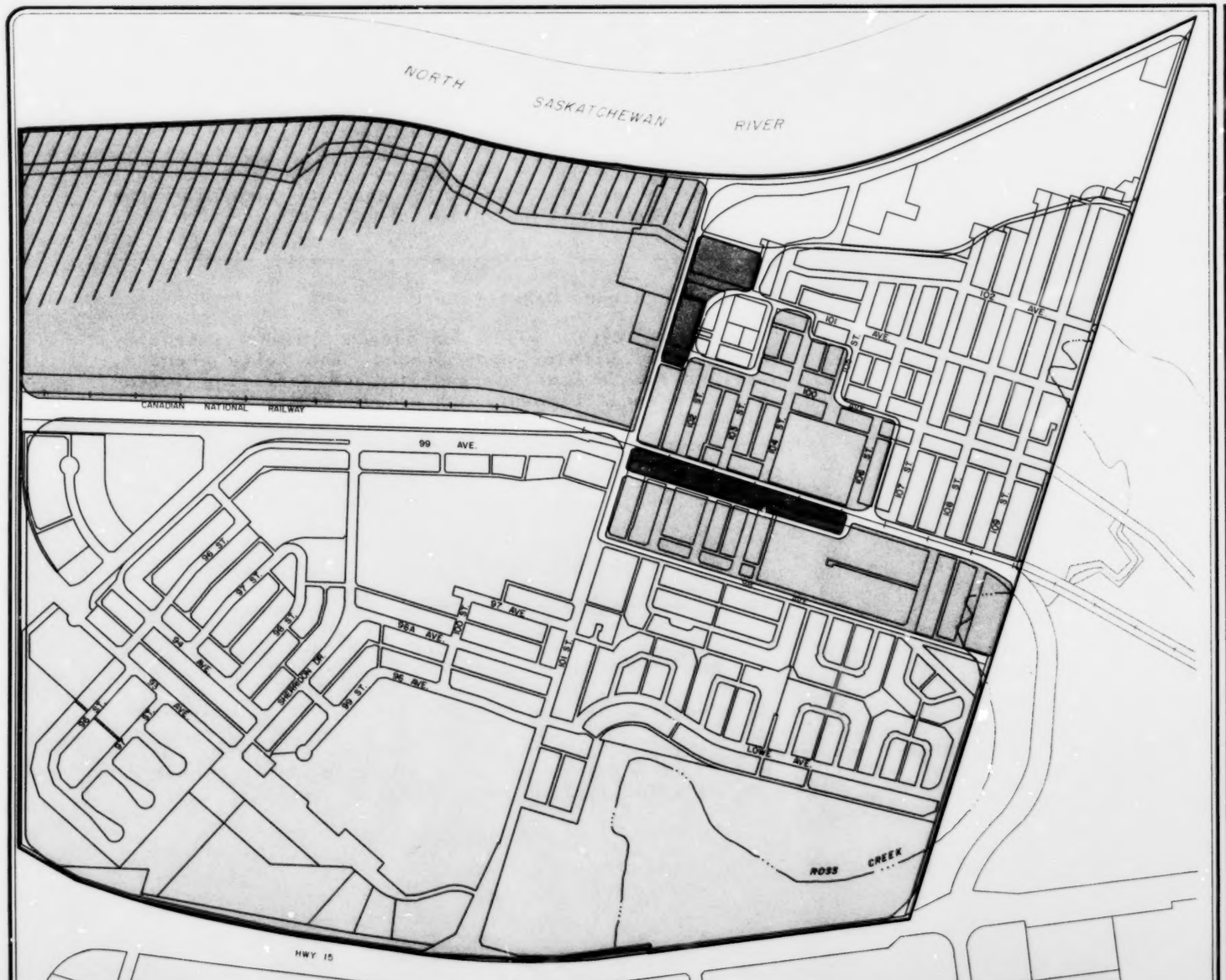
3.4 DEVELOPMENT IN THE CITY CENTRE

The development pattern of the city centre will ultimately determine its success as a living, shopping and working environment. Thus, it is of paramount importance that the different land uses complement each other and are organized to create a retail core that is comprehensible to residents and visitors alike. The Fort Saskatchewan city centre has slowly evolved along the axis created by the provincial gaol property and the railway line. However, with the pending redevelopment of these two features, the relationship between the various land uses in the city centre (commercial, residential, institutional, recreational) needs to be clearly defined. Therefore, the intent of the City is to establish broad land use areas in the city centre which will guide future development and allow sufficient intensity for each land use without overloading traffic, parking and servicing infrastructure facilities.

CONCEPT MAP

The Development Map describes a future development pattern for the city centre.

This map is not meant to indicate the detailed zoning of individual properties, but to provide a conceptual representation of the broad land use intentions of the City.



DEVELOPMENT

FORT SASKATCHEWAN CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- Low Density Urban
- Medium/High Density Residential
- Retail, Office and Service Commercial
- Vehicle Oriented Commercial
- Institutional, Cultural and Government Services
- Park and Open Space
- Gaol/Railway Properties
- Undevelopable Lands

Note: All land use classifications are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

Edmonton Metropolitan Regional Planning Commission

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POLICIES

The following policies are intended to guide decisions concerning the development of the city centre.

Policy 8: Orderly Development Pattern

That the City will ensure through the orderly distribution of different land uses, that the development of the city centre occurs in a harmonious and compatible manner.

The City would attempt to create areas of strong land use identity, and to situate these areas so that they functionally support and complement each other. Specifically this would involve:

(a) Concentrating retail and service commercial development along 102nd, 103rd and 104th Streets between 101st Avenue and 98th Avenue, to create a compact shopping area, with some spillover east of the Fort Mall.

(b) Locating mixed-use office and retail development throughout the city centre, but predominantly south of 99th Avenue.

(c) Reinforcing the existing civic government and institutional character of the area between 101st and 103rd Streets north of 100th Avenue.

(d) Encouraging multi-family housing to locate along the periphery of the retail core.

(e) Preserving the river valley as the recreational centre of the community and strengthening the link between this valley and the city centre.

Policy 9: Higher Density Core

That the City will encourage high intensity development within and around the city centre, provided the traffic, parking and servicing infrastructure facilities are not overloaded.

Specifically, the City would encourage such higher density developments in the city centre as:

(a) walk-up apartments, high rise apartments and senior citizen housing;

(b) mixed-use office and retail complexes;

(c) planned unit developments, mixing residential and commercial uses; and

(d) recreational, office and institutional complexes.

The developer may be required to submit information on the impact a higher density development will have on community facilities and infrastructure.

Policy 10: Strong Investment Climate

That the City will support and initiate economic and development incentives designed to create a strong investment climate within the city centre.

Incentives would be designed to:

(a) encourage existing businesses to remain or expand; and

(b) attract new investment to the retail core.

Such incentives would be evaluated, on a continuous basis, with respect to their 'cost-benefit' impact on the community, their effectiveness in encouraging new growth and their administrative efficiency.

3.5 IDENTITY OF THE CITY CENTRE

A retail centre's identity is created by its architecture, streetscape and landscaping, all working together to create a distinct feeling and impression. While the Fort Saskatchewan city centre is visually attractive, it lacks a strong identity supported by a central theme and focus. However, two recognizable character areas exist in the city centre and each provides unique opportunities to enhance the city centre's identity. The historical area, located north of 99th Avenue, contains older, architecturally significant buildings, and projects a quaint 'main street' image. By contrast, the newer area, located south of 99th Avenue, contains modern architecture and newer shopping complexes, office buildings and multi-use retail and service centres. Therefore, the intent of the City is to encourage the conservation of the heritage buildings within the original retail core, promote the separate identities of both the historical and contemporary character areas and improve the overall visual quality of the city centre.

CONCEPT MAP

The Identity Map identifies:

(a) those buildings in the city centre which have potential historical and/or architectural merit;

(b) the major character areas within the city centre (historical new and residential); and

(c) the location of potential historical focal points within the city centre.

POLICIES

The following policies are intended to guide decisions concerning the identity of the city centre.

Policy 11: Heritage Conservation

That the City will identify historically and architecturally significant buildings in the city centre and encourage their retention.

The Identity Map identifies heritage conservation sites within the city centre. Identification on this map does not represent a formal municipal designation, pursuant to the Historical Resources Act, but does indicate:

(a) that the particular building may, in the future, be investigated for possible designation as a municipal historical resource, in accordance with the Historical Resources Act; or

(b) that the City may introduce a number of measures, short of designation under the Historical Resources Act, to encourage the retention and rehabilitation of heritage buildings which are privately owned (e.g. incentive land use controls).

Measures taken by the City concerning the preservation of historically and architecturally significant buildings would occur in consultation with the Fort Saskatchewan Historical Society.

Policy 12: Distinctive Character

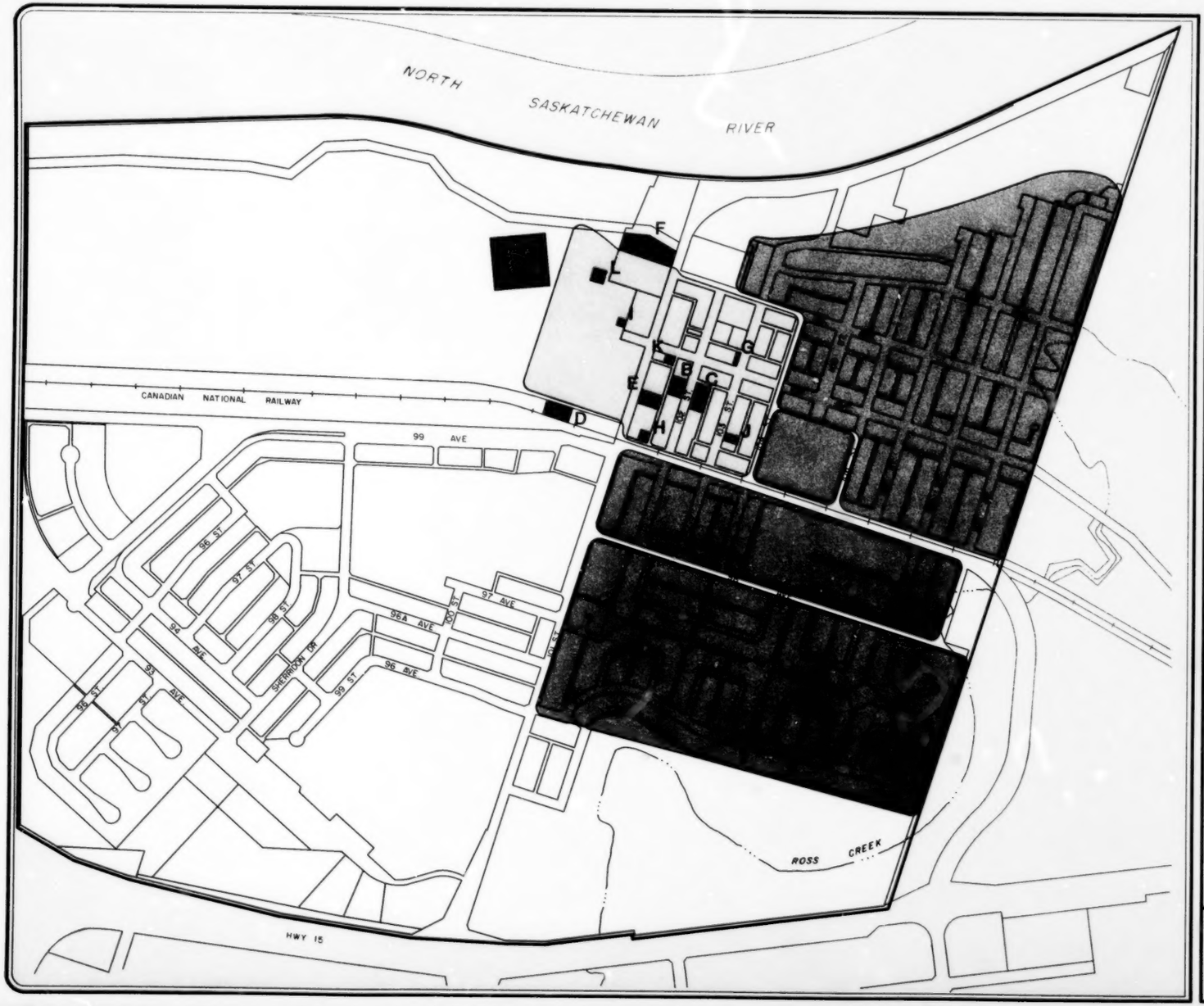
That the City will support the development of distinctive character areas within the city centre.

Three separate character areas are identified within the city centre: the historical character area, the new character area and the residential character area. Separate measures to enhance each of these areas may include:

(a) Historical Character Area: building design controls which reinforce the historical nature of the area; parking, setback and density regulations which recognize the site design constraints of this area; streetscape improvements modelled on an historical theme (light standards, street furniture, signs, fencing, etc.); local improvements to roadways, sidewalks, lane ways and parks to enhance the quality and appearance of the area.

(b) New Character Area: subdivision policies that allow the consolidation of small lots into larger parcels; site design standards that encourage the development of multi-use buildings and shopping centres; streetscape improvements which reflect the contemporary image of the area.

(c) Residential Character Area: development policies that encourage the retention of potentially historical homes, and that protect the residential neighbourhood from intrusion by higher density development.



IDENTITY

FORT SASKATCHEWAN CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- Residential Character Area
- Historic Character Area
- New Character Area
- Designated Heritage Site [1]
  - A Fort Saskatchewan Northwest Mounted Police Post
- Potential Heritage Conservation Site [2]
  - B Williamson Block
  - C Fort Hotel
  - D Canadian National Railway Station
  - E Masonic Hall
  - F Court House (museum)
  - G Old Firehall/Town Hall
  - H "O" Block (1902, 1907)
  - I Warden's House
  - J Dr. T.W.E. Henry's Home
  - K Post Office
  - L Original Womens Prison Wing

1 Designated under the Historical Resources Act.

2 Other potential heritage conservation sites not shown on the map may exist within the City Centre. For a complete list of such sites, consult the Fort Saskatchewan Historical Society and Alberta Culture.

Note: All land use classifications are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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In addition, the City will attempt to establish strong central focal points in the city centre, preferably in the historical character area.

Possible focal points include:

(a) the CN station at the entrance to the city centre along 99th Avenue;

(b) the museum and historical theme park west of Turner Park and the city centre area; and

(c) the historic fort site located within the provincial gaol property.

Policy 13: Quality Environment

That the City will initiate and support measures intended to improve the quality, design and appearance of the city centre.

These improvements may include:

(a) the continuous upkeep or, where necessary, replacement of public amenities (e.g. trees, street furniture);

(b) the encouragement of local merchants to undertake building facade improvements, where necessary;

(c) the maintenance and improvement of public spaces (sidewalks, streets, alleyways, park areas, boulevards);

(d) the removal of public utilities and facilities where these are determined to be aesthetically unattractive (overhead powerlines and poles, obsolete signs);

(e) the enforcement of minimum maintenance and litter by-laws, or similar municipal regulations, designed to ensure a defined standard of appearance or upkeep for private property;

(f) the review, monitoring and enforcement of land use by-law regulations dealing with building design, signage, lighting or landscaping; and

(g) the removal of derelict or condemned buildings from the city centre.

3.6 MOVEMENT WITHIN THE CITY CENTRE

The Fort Saskatchewan transportation network handles people and goods in a safe, efficient manner. However, some specific problems do exist with this network, as it relates to the city centre. Foremost, the provincial highways and local roadways are not focused on the city centre. As a result, commuters, visitors and travellers may bypass the city centre completely. In addition, the routing, capacity and condition of the roadway and walkway systems leading into the city centre require upgrading in certain instances, and new transportation measures, such as public transit and increased public parking, may be necessary in the future. Therefore, it is the intent of the City to initiate transportation improvements to strengthen the linkage between the city centre and the balance of the community and increase the centre's accessibility and convenience for motorists and pedestrians.

CONCEPT MAP

The Movement Map describes:

(a) the existing and proposed roadway system within the city centre;

(b) the major intersections requiring traffic control measures;

(c) the proposed bicycle trails and pedestrian routes leading to the city centre;

(d) the area affected by railway relocation;

(e) the possible location of a future public parking lot; and

(f) the areas where roadway design, widening and improvement are proposed.

POLICIES

The following policies are intended to guide decisions concerning movement within the city centre.

Policy 14: Consolidated Transportation Network

The City, through the transportation network, will integrate the city centre with suburban residential neighbourhoods, major employment sectors, park and open space systems and recreational and activity centres.

Transportation improvements that may accomplish this include:

(a) Development along 99th Avenue of a walkway system for pedestrians and bicycles to link the city centre with major park and open space areas (e.g. Turner Park, Golf Course, Jubilee Park) and residential neighbourhoods (e.g. Sherridon).

(b) Introduction of a public transit system which focuses on the city centre and provides public transportation between the suburban residential neighbourhoods and employment sectors and the city centre.

(c) Provision of signs at major decision points along Highways 21 and 15 to direct visitors and commuters to the city centre.

(d) Improvement and widening of roadways leading into the city centre, in particular 99th Avenue and 101st Street.

(e) Development and encouragement of pedestrian-oriented activities and amenities within the city centre area (e.g. parks, outdoor restaurants, skating rinks, etc.).

These measures would require that a comprehensive Transportation Plan, addressing issues of circulation, access and pedestrian amenities be prepared for the city centre.

Policy 15: Traffic Circulation

That the City will improve the vehicular and pedestrian traffic system to, from and within the city centre.

Pedestrian circulation system improvements may include:

(a) the provision of well-marked crosswalks at major intersections;

(b) the delineation of no parking areas, loading zones and handicapped parking with signs and painted curbs;

(c) the provision of a pedestrian system that addresses the needs of the handicapped; and

(d) the synchronization of traffic control lights along major thoroughfares in order to manage traffic flows.

Vehicular circulation system improvements may include:

(a) the eventual widening and division into lanes of 99th Avenue and 101st Street;

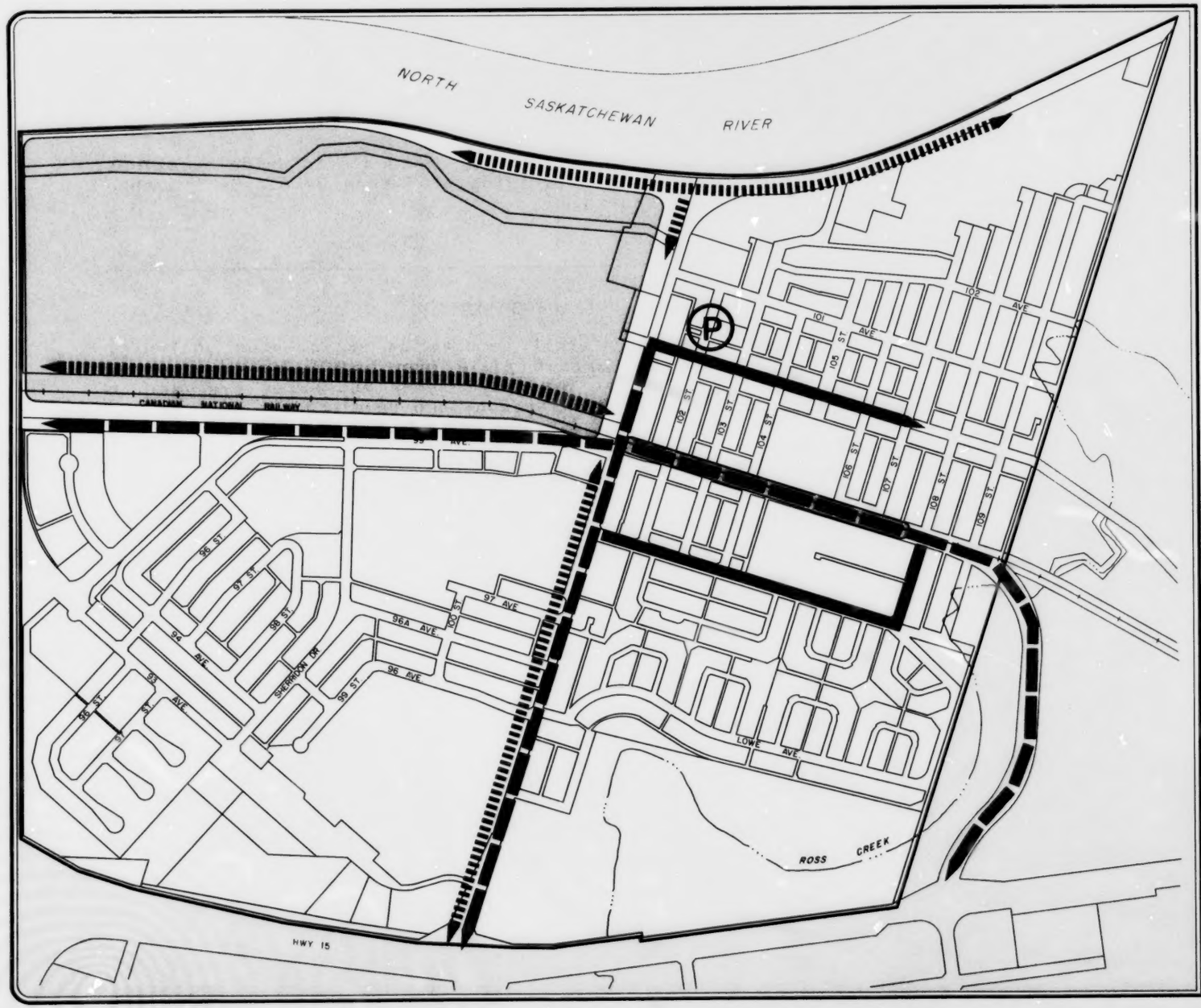
(b) subject to transportation engineering and planning analysis and feasibility studies, the extension of 100th Avenue westward through the provincial gaol property to connect with 99th Avenue; and

(c) following railway relocation, the redesign of the roadway system in the proximity of 99th Avenue to correct a confusing and inefficient traffic flow situation.

Policy 16: Traffic Convenience

That the City will improve parking, signage and pedestrian amenities within the city centre for the convenience of vehicles and foot traffic.

The City will provide public parking lots, municipal information, directional and traffic control signs and pedestrian amenities, as necessary and appropriate within the city centre, in order to attract activity and create a 'people-oriented' retail core.



MOVEMENT

FORT SASKATCHEWAN CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- Future Transportation Design [1]
- Major City Centre Throughfares
- Future Widening
- Future Pedestrian Linkage
- (P) Area of Future Public Parking Lot

1 Pedestrian/vehicular transportation network for the Provincial Gaol and Canadian National Railway properties to be determined at the detailed planning level.

Note: All future vehicular/pedestrian transportation routes are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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3.7 SERVICING OF THE CITY CENTRE

The growth of the city centre is dependent to a large degree on the ability of the sewer, water and storm drainage systems to support existing and future development. A 1981 Servicing Study, conducted by Associated Engineering Services Limited, established that the sewage collection system for the Fort Saskatchewan city centre is able to accommodate long term growth; on the other hand, the storm drainage and water distribution systems may require upgrading in the near future. Specifically, the storm drainage system in part of the city centre is not capable of handling runoff from infrequent, major storms, and the water distribution system is nearing capacity in the city centre for both firefighting and domestic consumption purposes. The situation is not critical, however, and will not affect present population and development levels. The intent of the City is to monitor the situation in the shorter term and assess proposed development projects to determine their impact on the existing water distribution system. Longer term actions would involve the upgrading of the present water distribution system within the city centre.

CONCEPT MAP

The Servicing Map describes the major improvements to the municipal utility systems (water, sewer, storm drainage) that may be required in the city centre in the future.

POLICIES

The following policies are intended to guide decisions concerning the servicing of future development within the city centre.

Policy 17: Servicing Impact

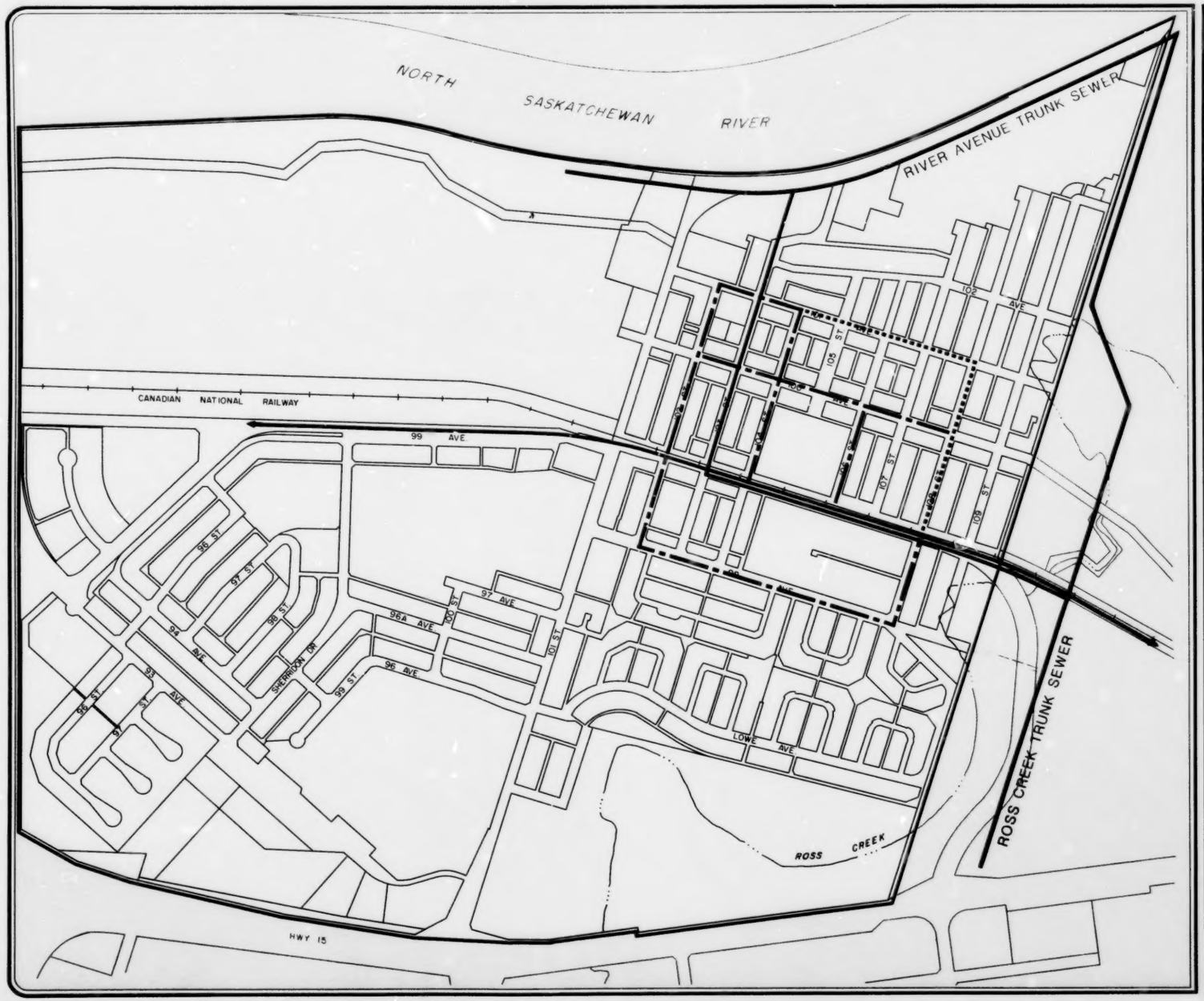
That the City will require an engineering analysis, showing the impact of a proposed major development project on the municipal sewer and water systems, be prepared and submitted by the developer.

Where it is determined that the servicing capacity of the sewer or water systems in the city centre is insufficient to satisfy the requirements of a proposed development project the City may require that:

(a) the use or density of the project be modified, as necessary;

(b) specific on-site facilities or safeguards be provided as part of the development project or;

(c) the municipal servicing system be upgraded, where necessary, at the developer's cost as a precondition to the development being approved.



SERVICING

FORT SASKATCHEWAN CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

WATER DISTRIBUTION SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

- —— 16 Inch Main Line
- -·— 12 Inch Feeder Line with Hydrants
- ····· 12 Inch Feeder Line Extension

SANITARY SEWAGE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

- —— Main Sewer Line Upgrading

STORM DRAINAGE SYSTEM IMPROVEMENTS

- Storm Drainage Line Upgrading
- —— Trunk Sewer Line

Source: Associated Engineering Services Ltd. Central Business District Services Study, 1981

Note: All servicing lines are conceptual only, and subject to change at the detailed planning level.

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In addition, the City will update the Downtown Servicing Study, prepared in 1981, as part of the overall service system planning for the central business district.

Policy 18: Servicing Demand

That the City will monitor the servicing demand in the city centre to determine when the level of development requires a major investment in utility infrastructure by the City or the private sector.

The City or the private sector may introduce major improvements to the water, sewer or storm drainage utilities, in response to the rate and extent of development of the city centre. However, the cost of such facilities may be borne by the private sector, the City, or both, depending upon the circumstances and subject to a specific evaluation at the appropriate time.

3.8 MARKETING OF THE CITY CENTRE

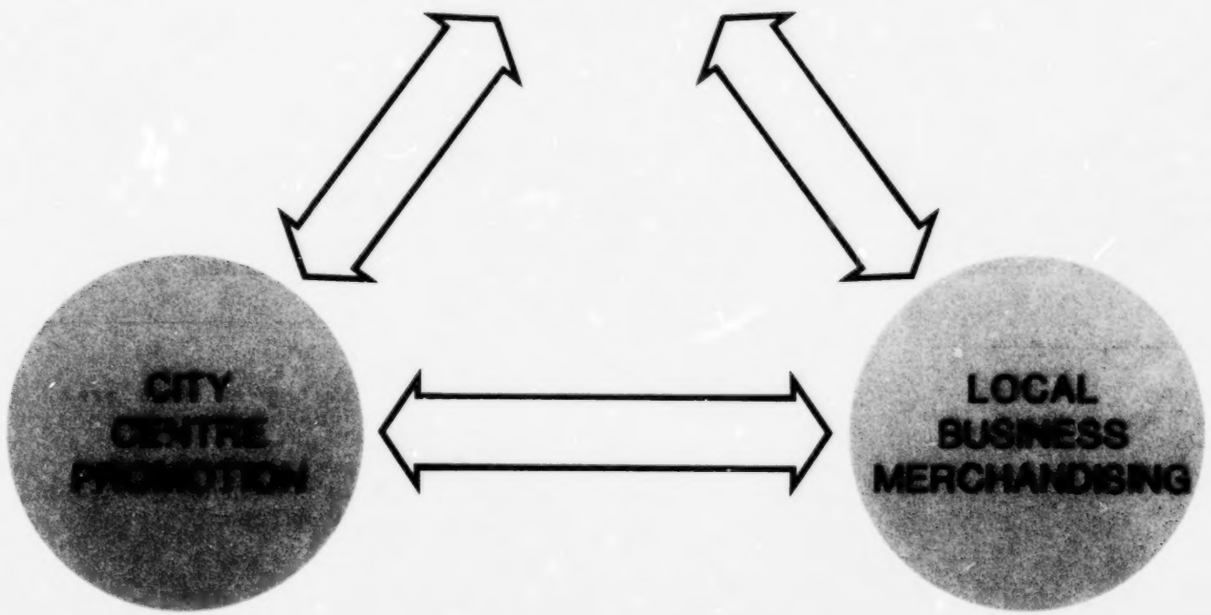
Regional trade area studies indicate that Fort Saskatchewan possesses a relatively strong market for a select range of goods and services (non-durable and convenience goods; specialized and professional services). The strength of this market is apparent by the large number of small, independent shops and service establishments located throughout the city centre. However, increasing competition from shopping malls and discount food stores in Edmonton, the general downturn in the economy and future improvements to the transportation linkages between Fort Saskatchewan and Edmonton may combine to erode this market. It is, therefore, imperative that a committed and co-operative merchandising and promotion campaign for the city centre be introduced to retain the present market share and penetrate any new markets that may exist. While the implementation of such a campaign is largely the responsibility of the business community, it is the intent of the City to support the business community in its marketing of the Fort Saskatchewan city centre within the metropolitan region, and to actively engage in the overall economic planning of the community.

CONCEPT DIAGRAM

The Marketing Diagram schematically illustrates the three levels of marketing which relate to the city centre. These are:

(a) Economic Development Planning for the community, with emphasis on the commercial sector (economic development planning is directed toward attracting new investment to the city centre);

COMMUNITY ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT



MARKETING

FORT SASKATCHEWAN
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

Community Economic Development

Marketing the Community and the City Centre to Attract New Business Investment

(Eg. Communicating to target markets, developing high profile public relations, improving the investment climate)

- City Centre Promotion

  Marketing the City Centre to Increase Regional Market Share and Expand the Trading Area

  (Eg. Holiday special promotional events, coordinating sales activities, organizing different business interests)

- Local Business Merchandising

  Marketing an Individual City Centre Business to Increase that Business' Profit Margin

  (Eg. Increasing product selection, improving levels of service, increasing advertising activities)

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MAY 1986

(b) City Centre Marketing involving the retail core directly (city centre promotion is aimed at expanding regional and local trading areas and meeting competition from surrounding communities and Edmonton); and

(c) Business Marketing (merchandising involving the individual merchant promoting his own business).

POLICIES

The following policies are intended to guide decisions concerning the marketing of the city centre.

Policy 19: Economic Planning

That the City will formulate a community economic strategy, in which city centre development will be a major component, and will actively engage in economic planning.

The City has presently formed an Economic Development Board whose main responsibility is to develop an economic strategy for Fort Saskatchewan.

Policy 20: City Centre Marketing

That the City will support and assist the business community, where possible and practical, in the formulation and implementation of a city-wide marketing campaign, with emphasis on the city centre.

The City, through the Chamber of Commerce, would become involved in developing a promotional campaign for the city centre.

Policy 21: Business Marketing

That the City will support and assist the individual city centre merchants, where possible and practical, in promoting established local businesses.

Although the City's role is limited in this area, it could provide assistance, through the Chamber of Commerce, by informing the business community of available government programs and grants and organizing marketing seminars and workshops specifically for the city centre merchant.

3.9 ORGANIZATION OF THE CITY CENTRE

As shopping malls would seem to demonstrate, successful marketing requires effective organization. The Fort Saskatchewan city centre is supported by an active Chamber of Commerce and contains a City Centre Association and Mall Association. The strategy proposes to improve upon this existing organizational structure. Specifically, a new business-municipal partnership organization will be introduced to develop and market the city centre, and an intergovernmental project management agency will be established to oversee the disposition and redevelopment of the gaol and railway properties. In addition, the City would generally support the introduction of a financial mechanism (e.g. BRZ legislation) to fund city centre improvement projects initiated by the local merchants.

CONCEPT DIAGRAM

The Organization Diagram schematically illustrates the relationship between the proposed City Centre Development Authority and the Intergovernmental Project Management Agency.

Table 3.1 shows the possible membership of these proposed organizations.

TABLE 3.1

MEMBERSHIP COMPOSITION FOR PROPOSED CITY CENTRE ORGANIZATIONS

INTEREST GROUP	REPRESENTATION	DESCRIPTION
City Government (two members)	○ ◑	One or more representatives from City Council. Possibly, one representative from Civic Administration.
Business (three members)	◑ ◑ ◑	One representative from Chamber of Commerce. One representative each from Fort Mall Association and City Centre Association.
Community (one member)	◑	One representative from Economic Development Board.
Provincial Government (two members)	◐ ◐	Two representatives from the Province.

○ Denotes membership in both City Centre Development Authority and Intergovernmental Project Management/Agency.

◐ Denotes membership in City Centre Development Authority only.

◑ Denotes membership in Intergovernmental Project Management Agency only.

POLICIES

The following policies are intended to guide decisions concerning the organization of the city centre.

Policy 22: Municipal Support

That, where possible and practical, the City will provide the business community with continuing assistance, through the Chamber of Commerce, in the organization, financing and management of the city centre.

This support may include:

(a) the holding of joint meetings between the members of council and local businessmen to discuss issues of common interest relating to the city centre;

(b) the provision of meeting rooms and facilities for city centre organizational meetings;

(c) the provision of administrative and technical staff to assist in city centre organization.

The level of assistance provided, relative to any of the foregoing matters, would be subject to a specific review by the Council.

Policy 23: Business-Municipal Partnership

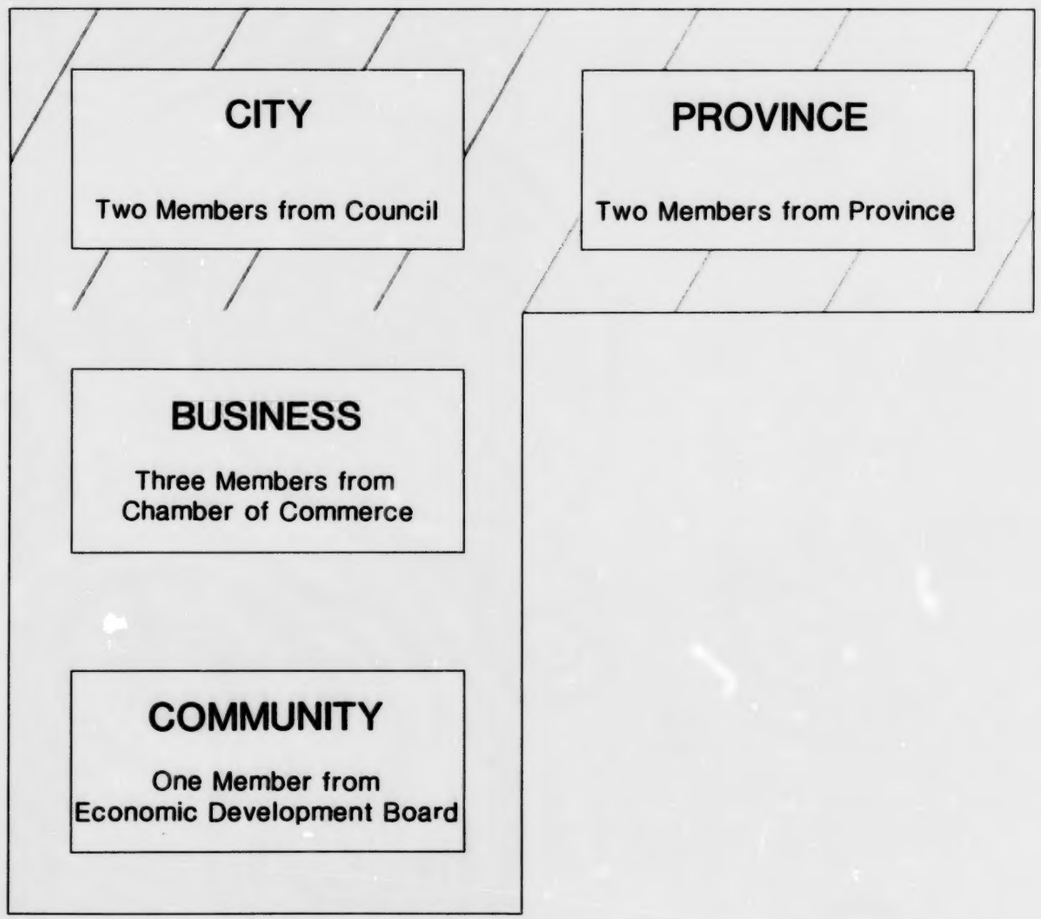
That the City will co-operate with the business community, through the formation of a common business-municipal partnership organization, to plan, develop and market the city centre.

The partnership organization (City Centre Development Authority) would, ideally, be comprised of members from the Business Community (one member each from the Chamber of Commerce, Mall Association and City Centre Association), City (one elected official and one civic employee), and Community (one member from the Economic Development Board).

The main functions of the City Centre Development Authority would be to make recommendations to the City Council on matters affecting the city centre and to initiate and oversee development and marketing activities.

Policy 24: Intergovernmental Management

That the City will co-operate with the Province in jointly managing the disposition and development of the gaol and railway properties, through a common agency, and enter into other municipal-provincial ventures affecting the city centre.



ORGANIZATION

FORT SASKATCHEWAN
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

- City Centre Development Authority [1]
- Intergovernmental Project Management Agency [1]

1 For details of membership, refer to Table 3.1 in the plan text

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MAY 1986

An intergovernmental organization (Intergovernmental Project Management Agency) would, ideally, be comprised of members from the Provincial Government (two representatives) and the City (two representatives).

The agency would oversee such aspects of gaol and railway redevelopment as timing, ownership and design.

Policy 25: Business Financing

That the City will co-operate with the business community in the introduction of financial mechanisms to fund city centre improvement projects (e.g. Business Revitalization Zone).

Many methods of financing city centre improvement projects are available. One of the more innovative methods in Alberta is the Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ).

The BRZ concept, applied successfully in other provinces, allows funds to be levied from all those businesses situated in such a zone. These funds can then be applied to projects and programs of common benefit to all businesses.

The main role of the Council in the BRZ process is to enact a by-law, in accordance with the provisions of the Municipal Government Act, establishing a Business Revitalization Zone. Following this the Council would administer and oversee aspects of the BRZ operation and budgeting. However, the major decisions concerning the amount and disposition of BRZ funds to be collected would rest with those businesses located in the BRZ.

3.10 MANAGEMENT OF THE CITY CENTRE

When plans and strategies for a community's retail centre are unsuccessful, three main reasons can usually be cited. First, the plan is not comprehensive and tends to deal with only one element of city centre planning (e.g. servicing, land use, transportation) while ignoring other aspects (e.g. marketing, organization). Second, the plan frequently is 'end-state' in its approach, striving to achieve a final product as opposed to viewing the retail core as a dynamic, interactive system. Finally, the plan does not consider implementation to be an important component of success. Because it fails to regard commitment and action as essential to achieving its desired goals and objectives, the planning document is never implemented.

This strategy for the City of Fort Saskatchewan City Centre places a high priority on implementation. It is the intent of the City to commit itself to the policies and programs presented in this strategy and undertake a 'plan of action' to initiate, co-ordinate and manage the improvement of the city centre.

CONCEPT DIAGRAM

The Management Diagram schematically illustrates the role of this strategic plan in relation to the more detailed levels of action planning (policies, project and program implementation) that will occur.

POLICIES

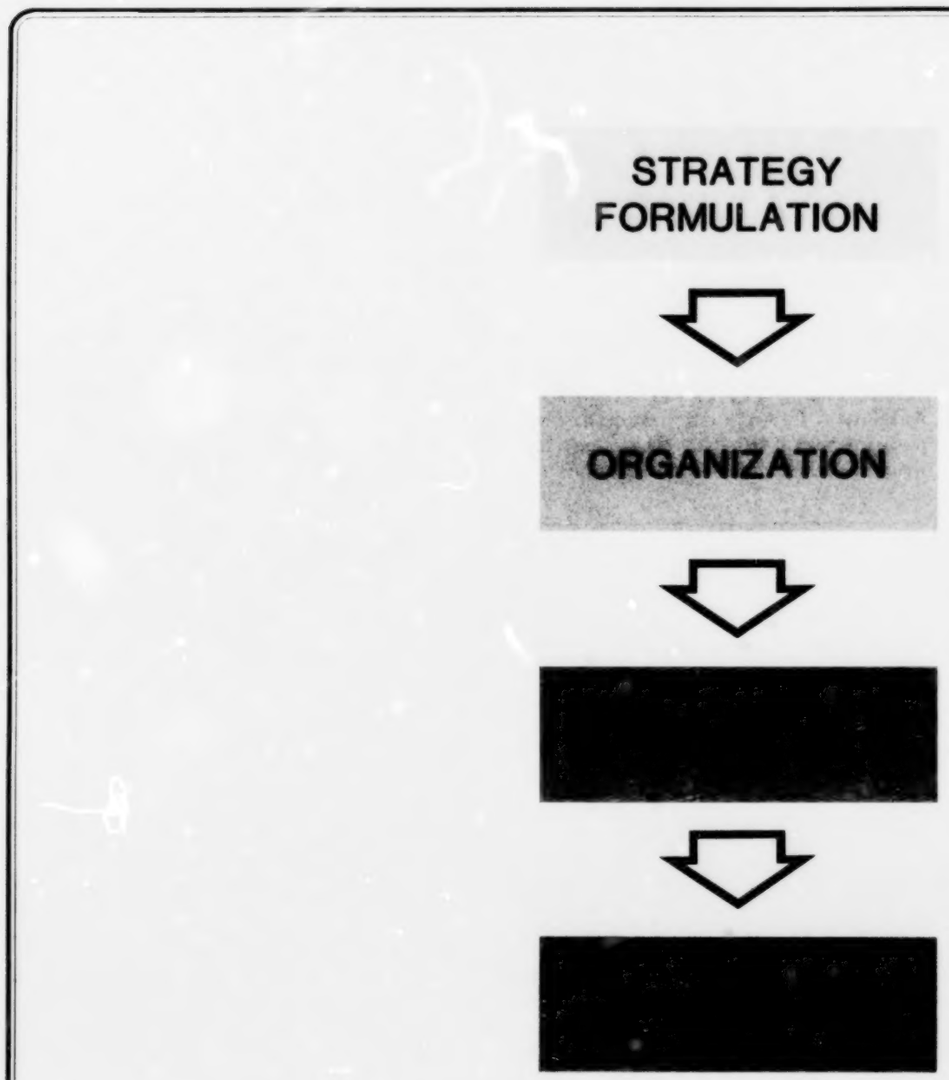
The following policy is intended to guide decisions concerning the management of the city centre.

Policy 26: Implementation

That the City will implement the strategy through an Action Plan of projects and programs and review progress, on a six month basis, to identify areas where activities require redirection or improvement.

The policies and programs comprising the strategy would be implemented primarily by the City Centre Development Authority and Intergovernmental Project Management Agency.

The Action Plan should be referred to for information concerning the timing, responsibility and process involved in the implementation of a given city centre program.



MANAGEMENT

FORT SASKATCHEWAN
CITY CENTRE STRATEGY

Strategy Formulation
Development of Planning Strategy for the Fort Saskatchewan City Centre

Organization
Formation of City Centre Development Authority and Intergovernmental Project Management Agency

Implementation
Preparation of Detailed Action Plan for the Implementation of City Centre Strategy Programs

Action
Initiation of Programs and Projects in accordance with the Action Plan

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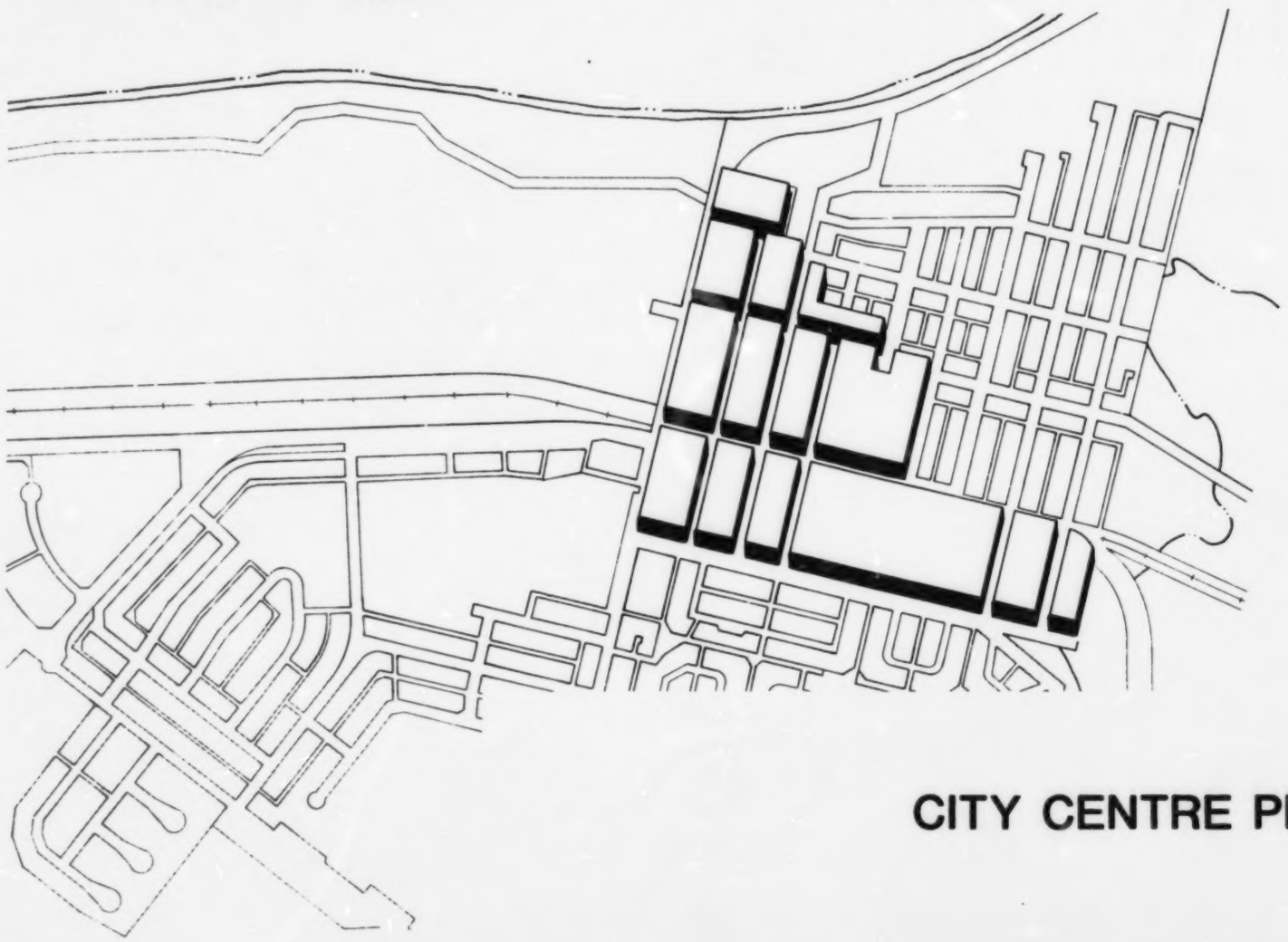
MAY 1986



PART 4
CITY CENTRE PROGRAMS

4.1 PROGRAMS TO STRENGTHEN THE ROLE OF THE CITY CENTRE

With the City's growth there will be increasing pressure for commercial decentralization as businesses attempt to locate in proximity to new residential areas and along commuter traffic routes. If the city centre is to retain its traditional role, programs, designed to strengthen and clarify public policy concerning the distribution of commercial development in the City, are necessary.

PROGRAMS

The following program is intended to clarify the role of the city centre in the community.

Program A: Business Location Policy

That policy concerning the distribution of commercial development in the City be clarified and strengthened.

The Fort Saskatchewan General Municipal Plan contains a locational policy for future commercial development in the City. The plan was adopted by the Council in 1979, during a period of rapid economic growth and high expectations. Over five years have elapsed since the adoption of this plan, and a detailed review of the City's business location policy is now appropriate, to ensure that this policy reflects current community aspirations and economic trends. In particular, the review should clarify:

(a) the location and extent of highway commercial development along Highways 15 and 21;

(b) the type and scale of commercial activity which will be allowed to locate within existing and future business parks to the northeast of the city centre;

(c) the location and scale of any future community shopping centre that may be allowed to be developed outside the city centre;

(d) the location and scale of neighbourhood convenience shopping centres to be developed in future suburban residential areas.

4.2 PROGRAMS TO GUIDE THE FUTURE GROWTH OF THE CITY CENTRE

The location and extent of future retail development can affect the character and form of the city centre. Therefore, programs designed to ensure that short-term and long-term commercial expanion is ideally located and to protect residential areas adjacent to the city centre are necessary.

PROGRAMS

The following programs are intended to guide the rate, direction and extent of future city centre growth.

Program B: Concentration of Shorter Term Growth

That measures to concentrate commercial development, in the short term, within the existing city centre and to protect peripheral residential neighbourhoods be examined and introduced.

The Fort Saskatchewan retail core contains sufficient land to accommodate future commercial development in the shorter term (i.e. the next ten years). Measures designed to focus growth into this existing core include:

(a) review of municipal policy in the City's General Municipal Plan to ensure that it reflects the philosophy of concentrating development and limiting the outward expansion of the city centre;

(b) review of the regulations in the City's Land Use By-law to ensure that adequate protection is provided for the established residential areas interfacing with the city centre and that the city centre's existing perimeter is clearly defined;

(c) identification of those areas within the city centre which could accommodate potential commercial expansion (i.e. vacant and underutilized properties) and the introduction of economic and development incentives to encourage the redevelopment of those areas.

Program C: Gaol and Railway Property Development

That liaison continue between the City and the Province concerning the disposition and development of the gaol and railway properties and that an urban design plan for these properties be prepared.

Although the elementary school site and peripheral residential areas to the east of the city centre can accommodate some limited development, the primary sites for future city centre expansion are the gaol and railway properties. As these properties are presently under the jurisdiction of the Province, continuous co-operation between the City and provincial departments is necessary concerning the eventual redevelopment of this land (e.g. timing, ownership, design, project management).

An urban design plan for the gaol property needs to be prepared at this time. The plan should describe future land use patterns, roadway networks and utility servicing systems, and would form the basis for detailed planning and engineering studies to be conducted prior to the actual development stage. Specifically, the urban design plan should determine:

(a) the relationship of the gaol property's future development pattern to the existing central business district, and how integration of roadways, land uses, architectural design and parkways between these future and existing areas would be accomplished;

(b) the proposed staging of development and the eventual disposition and ownership of the gaol property; and

(c) the costs to be borne by the Province and the City for roadways, services and land development, and the methods of funding to be used.

The redevelopment of the railway right-of-way would provide land for city centre expansion and is the key to rectifying the present north-south division of the city centre that now exists. The urban design plan should:

(a) attempt to physically integrate the north and south areas of the city centre through the realignment of adjacent street systems and pedestrian routes;

(b) examine the potential for developing a portion of the CN right-of-way for commercial use or as a major civic attraction;

(c) create, for the city centre, a visually attractive entrance which affords patrons convenient access to shopping areas either north or south of 99th Avenue; and

(d) improve the pedestrian traffic circulation pattern along 99th Avenue by reducing the 'barrier' effect that this roadway creates.

The preparation of an urban design plan for the gaol and railway properties would require extensive input from citizens, merchants, business groups and the City Council.

4.3 PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE THE STRUCTURE OF THE CITY CENTRE

A fragmented development pattern in the city centre can create planning, transportation and organizational problems. Therefore, programs designed to improve the structure of the Fort Saskatchewan city centre, by integrating the areas to the north and south of 99th Avenue, are essential.

PROGRAMS

The following programs are intended to improve the physical structure of the city centre.

Program D: Encourage Interaction Between the North and South City Centre Areas

That measures to encourage the movement of vehicle and pedestrian traffic across 99th Avenue, between the north and south areas of the city centre, be introduced.

The relatively high volume of vehicles using 99th Avenue, coupled with the elevated railway line and limited crossing points, creates a psychological barrier for cross-traffic movement. As a result, shoppers habitually patronize one side or the other but rarely move across this roadway. Measures to overcome the problem and encourage a free flow between the north and south need to be introduced. Possible measures to accomplish this include:

(a) the synchronization of traffic lights along 99th Avenue to impede vehicle traffic flows at given intersections and allow pedestrians to cross at several points; in addition, the eventual development of a major cross-walk at 104th Street and 99th Avenue;

(b) the placement of well-marked crosswalks with traffic control or caution lights along 99th Avenue particularly in the vicinity of 102nd and 103rd Streets;

(c) the placement of informational signs at key intersections within the city centre to direct patrons to important locations and events on both sides of the tracks (e.g. museum, river valley parks, civic administrative offices, shopping malls, historical city centre, library, farmers' market, etc.);

(d) the introduction of traffic control devices to improve vehicle access to the north and south along 99th Avenue (e.g. left-turn-only signals, turning lanes);

(e) the introduction of pedestrian amenities along 99th Avenue to attract people to the area (e.g. street furniture, trees and landscaping, transit shelters);

(f) the development of commercial uses in proximity to 99th Avenue to attract patrons from throughout the city centre (e.g. centrally located farmers' market); and

(g) the introduction of a major civic attraction along the railway line (e.g. old steam engine display).

4.4 PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE THE LAND DEVELOPMENT PROCESS WITHIN THE CITY CENTRE

A city centre must strive to achieve the best allocation of different land uses through a development process which is responsive, innovative and incentive-oriented, and fairly balances the interests of the community and the development industry. Programs designed to achieve such a development process are essential to the effective planning of the retail core.

PROGRAMS

The following programs are intended to improve the land development process in the city centre.

Program E: Review of City Centre Planning Process

That the regulations, processes and procedures governing the development of land within the city centre be reviewed and improved as necessary.

The Fort Saskatchewan Land Use By-law regulates the use of land throughout the community. This document needs to be reviewed in detail in view of the changing economic environment and municipal philosophy toward development. The review should attempt to accomplish the following:

(a) flexibility - by allowing latitude in the design of a project, encouraging innovation and allowing proposals to be assessed on their planning merits rather than on the basis of prohibitory regulations;

(b) direction - by properly identifying different land use areas, densities and designs, and taking into account both planning and marketing concerns;

(c) openness - by encouraging input into the process from the business community, development industry and general public;

(d) efficiency - by eliminating unnecessary 'red tape' and delays;

(e) political accountability - by ensuring political control over the administrative process;

(f) partnership - by allowing the City and developer to work together to their mutual benefit.

Program F: Introduce Investment Incentives

That public and private sector investment be encouraged within the city centre through the introduction of economic and development incentives.

Communities can use economic and development incentives to create a climate conducive to business investment.

Economic incentives encourage investment since they result in direct monetary gains for the investor. The most frequently used incentives are the reduction or elimination of off-site levies or redevelopment levies, the granting of servicing concessions to the developer, or the allocation of government grants, in the form of money or land, to attract particular businesses.

Development incentives have a less direct monetary effect for a potential business investment but, nevertheless, result in cost savings for a development project. Development incentives are effective in channelling growth to certain sectors of the community (e.g. the city centre), or away from other communities. Such incentives take the form of bonus zoning controls and flexible or 'open door' development policies.

The City would need to introduce various types of economic and development incentives on a trial basis, monitor their success, and make adjustments and changes accordingly.

4.5 PROGRAMS TO CREATE A STRONG IDENTITY FOR THE CITY CENTRE

The ability of the retail core to attract patrons and investment depends, in part, on the image it projects. Image, or identity, results from the correct combination of many different elements (streetscape appearance, architectural design, theme areas, landscaping, etc.). Programs designed to enhance the identity of the city centre are provided here.

PROGRAMS

The following programs are intended to create a strong identity for the city centre.

Program G: Conservation of Heritage Buildings

That measures to encourage private landowners to retain and rehabilitate buildings of architectural or historical interest in the city centre be introduced.

The Fort Saskatchewan city centre contains a number of buildings that should be conserved. Although municipal designation under the Alberta Historical Resources Act represents one method of conserving such buildings, it may not be necessarily the best as it can involve compensation to the landowner. Other means are also effective and should be investigated further. These alternative methods include:

(a) Land Use Density System - A density system could be instituted in the local land use by-law. Through this system a landowner would be allowed to develop at a higher than normal density where it had been agreed that the heritage building was to be preserved by either complete incorporation into the new structure or retention of original exterior features.

(b) Development Incentives - Incentives or bonuses could be introduced whereby the City would agree to relax parking or similar requirements when approving a new use on a site in exchange for an assurance that the heritage building would be preserved. Incentives could be negotiated on a case-by-case basis or formally instituted through criteria or a formula in the land use by-law.

(c) Other Methods - Other methods of promoting the conservation of heritage buildings could be explored. Such methods may include a municipal grant or public purchase program. The viability of any method will depend upon what can be accomplished under existing legislation, the co-operation of affected property owners, the financial ability of the City to carry out a heritage conservation program, and the availability and interest of community volunteers.

Program H: Character Area Design Plans

That area design plans be prepared for the distinctive character areas within the city centre to provide direction for future beautification, conservation and improvement actions.

Public and private initiatives respecting city centre improvements require direction and co-ordination. A detailed area design plan needs to be prepared for each of the distinctive character areas in the city centre (i.e. historical character area, new character area, residential character area). These design plans would accomplish the following:

(a) provide architectural guidelines for building design to ensure that new development would be consistent in appearance, scale and form with the existing buildings;

(b) identify an historical conservation area within the city centre and suggest measures to encourage its development;

(c) provide suggestions for street furnishings within those selected areas of the city centre (e.g. historical city centre) that have a common theme;

(d) identify historically significant buildings within the city centre and provide illustrated examples of how they could be renovated and improved;

(e) define the major focal points within the city centre and suggest ways they could be developed (e.g. museum, railway station);

(f) provide suggestions for improving the city centre entrance, parks and boulevards, roadways and laneways, and vacant lots.

These urban design plans would, together, form a comprehensive and integrated design and beautification concept for the entire city centre.

Program I: Civic Government Initiative

That the City, in co-operation with the business community, investigate ways for each to become actively involved in city centre beautification and improvement.

City centre improvement is not just the responsibility of the merchant, but depends largely upon public sector involvement. The public sector can initiate city centre improvement in two ways: through direct action and by indirect encouragement.

Direct public actions indicate a commitment by local government and provide momentum for the business community. Such actions would involve public investment in visible city centre improvements, for example:

(a) the paving and fencing of public parking lots;

(b) continuing maintenance of signage, walkways and boulevards;

(c) removal of overhead wires; introduction of street furnishings;

(d) provision of walkways through the middle of commercial blocks; paving of laneways; and

(e) continuous emphasis on the repair and maintenance of public facilities and property.

Indirect public improvement initiatives may include:

(a) changes to the land use by-law regulations to create a bonus/incentive system which encourages revitalization of city centre buildings;

(b) requesting changes to provincial tax legislation to allow the City to enter into agreements with property owners for the 'freezing' of taxes for up to five years to provide incentives for the renovation or restoration of existing city centre buildings;

(c) review and improvement of by-laws pertaining to the maintenance of existing properties, condemned properties and vacant buildings and lots, and the enforcement of those by-laws.

4.6 PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE MOVEMENT INTO AND WITHIN THE CITY CENTRE

A city centre transportation system should allow for the safe and unimpeded flow of pedestrians and vehicles, link suburban residential areas and employment centres with the retail core, and accommodate a range of different modes of transport. Programs addressing access, circulation, parking and pedestrian movement within the city centre are provided here.

PROGRAMS

The following programs are intended to improve the transportation system of the city centre.

Program J: Central Area Transportation Plan

That a comprehensive transportation plan, with an emphasis on the retail core, be prepared for the city's central area.

A transportation plan should be prepared by City staff and would involve, mainly, the consolidation and updating of existing studies and plans.

The plan could address such matters as:

(a) major roadways to be widened and upgraded, and proposed roadways to be constructed, if any;

(b) roadway realignment following railway relocation in the vicinity of 99th Avenue between 101st and 109th Streets;

(c) future pedestrian walkways, bicycle paths and river valley nature trails;

(d) future public parking areas and linkages between them and walkways, lanes, streets and major city centre origin-destination points;

(e) required improvements to traffic controls, cross-walks and directional signage;

(f) pedestrian routes between buildings and laneways;

(g) aesthetic improvements to boulevards (e.g. tree planting, landscaping), sidewalks (e.g. special brick, curb cuts for the handicapped), roadways (e.g. line painting, cross-walks) and public spaces (e.g. walkways through the centre of blocks, screen fencing along public parking lots);

(h) location of proposed public parking lots; and

(i) changes to traffic flow patterns (e.g. one way streets) and main intersections (e.g. new turning lanes, left-hand turn signals).

Program K: Access Improvement

That improvements to the pedestrian and vehicular access routes to the city centre be introduced, to strengthen the relationship between the retail core and the residential and employment sectors of the community.

A major problem confronting the city centre is its relatively weak transportation link with the outlying suburban and industrial areas. Specific improvements to strengthen this link may include:

(a) the introduction of a public transit system serving the suburban residential neighbourhoods and focussing on the city centre;

(b) the provision of a high quality pedestrian walkway system between the city centre and the park and residential areas;

(c) the placement of highway directional signs at community entrance points to indicate the location of the city centre; and the placement of information signs at the entrance to the downtown (i.e. 99th Avenue and 101st Street) to direct visitors to major destination points.

Program L: Circulation Improvement

That improvements to the pedestrian and vehicular traffic flow pattern within the city centre be introduced to create an efficient and convenient circulation system.

The city centre circulation system presents some problems, particularly along 99th Avenue on both sides of the CN rail line. Improvements to the system may include:

(a) redesign of the roadway system along the CN rail line to achieve a more efficient traffic flow pattern (contingent upon railway relocation);

(b) reinforce the operation of 99th Avenue and 100th Avenue as a parallel spine system to carry traffic within the city centre;

(c) continue to provide a small-scale network of full two-way streets that permit traffic impacts to be dispersed over several alternative routes rather than being focussed on a few streets;

(d) protect residential neighborhoods in proximity to the city centre from internal cross-traffic flows by directing traffic to major city centre thoroughfares.

Program M: Parking Improvement

That parking in the city centre, particularly north of 99th Avenue, be continuously monitored and the necessary controls and facilities be introduced.

Although the city centre parking problem is not critical, some specific issues have arisen. These issues, relating to parking supply and control, need to be addressed by the City and business community. Possible actions in this regard include:

(a) reviewing existing parking policy to determine short and long term demand and revising parking standards in the land use by-law, if necessary;

(b) examining solutions to the more immediate parking problems (e.g. improved access to existing parking lots; introducing a 'business control system' to make existing on-street parking available to customers, not employees);

(c) determining a site for a new public parking lot north of 99th Avenue along 102nd Street, and investigating financing alternatives for land and construction.

Program N: Encourage Pedestrian Traffic

That measures to encourage 'foot-traffic' within the city centre on a year-round basis be initiated.

In the shorter term, this program would involve introducing 'people-oriented' activities on a seasonal basis (e.g. skating rink, farmers' market, 'lunch-bag' theatre, exhibits, special events, etc.).

In the longer term, the program would require creating 'pedestrian places' (e.g. park areas, kiosks, outdoor vendors, street cafes, etc.). Some of these measures would involve direct action or support by the community, but the majority would be private ventures.

4.7 PROGRAMS TO IMPROVE THE SERVICING OF THE CITY CENTRE

The future growth of a city centre is dependent upon the ability of the utility infrastructure to support development. Therefore, a program to determine the timing, financing and methods of upgrading the servicing capacity in the City's retail core is required.

PROGRAMS

The following programs are intended to improve the servicing of the downtown.

Program O: Update Five-Year Servicing Plan

That the City's five-year servicing plan for the city centre be updated with respect to the timing and financing of utility infrastructure improvements (sewer, water, storm drainage).

An updated engineering study is needed to determine the location and timing of servicing improvements; possible ways to recapture capital costs for major water system upgrading; the long term implications on the form and density of the city centre if upgrading of the present infrastructure is delayed; the ramifications of requiring private developers to pay the complete cost of upgrading infrastructure through development levies; and the feasibility of requiring the developer to provide on-site firefighting safeguards, in lieu of municipal water system improvements.

Program P: Monitor Servicing Demand

That servicing demand in the city centre be monitored to determine when the level of development requires a major investment in utility infrastructure by the City or private sector.

Continuous review of the servicing situation in the city centre, particularly the water distribution system, in relation to the level of development is required. This review would enable the City to schedule servicing improvements properly, determine the method of financing, and allocate improvement costs between the public and private sectors.

4.8 PROGRAMS TO MARKET THE CITY CENTRE

A successful city centre results, not only from effective planning, but also because of an aggressive, well-run marketing campaign. Therefore, programs designed to market the city centre, locally and regionally, are necessary.

PROGRAMS

The following programs are intended to market the city centre effectively.

Program Q: Economic Development Plan

That an Economic Development Plan be prepared for Fort Saskatchewan, which contains an overall strategy for attracting new investment to the community, including the city centre.

An Economic Development Plan has been undertaken by the City's Economic Development Board. The basic steps involved in completing this plan are as follows:

(a) define the economic goals of the community and, in particular, the city centre (goal formulation);

(b) identify community assets and liabilities in relation to new business activity (market assessment);

(c) determine the major problems facing the community which will need to be overcome (issue identification);

(d) define target firms which the community, and specifically the city centre, could reasonably attract and which would be of benefit to the City (market segmentation);

(e) determine those measures which would create an environment conducive to investment by target firms and attract business activity generally (market stimulation);

(f) identify methods for communicating to the market place the advantages and benefits of the community (market penetration).

Program R: City Centre Marketing Campaign

That a city wide marketing campaign be initiated and developed to comprehensively promote the city centre locally and regionally.

A merchandising campaign is not directly aimed at attracting new firms to the community, but at promoting the city centre in order to attract new patrons and increase its market share. The campaign would require that the city centre merchants work closely together to address such promotional matters as:

(a) co-ordination of the Fort Mall and City Centre Association's advertising and special events programs;

(b) developing city centre wide theme activities (e.g. carnivals, craft shows, agricultural displays);

(c) improving the level of city centre service (e.g. co-ordinated shopping hours);

(d) introducing seasonal activities designed to attract regional shoppers (e.g. Christmas sales, holiday specials).

A merchandising campaign would need to be updated continuously in response to competition from other regional shopping areas and as new ideas emerge.

Program S: Merchandising

That city centre merchants be kept informed of the programs and grants available from senior government agencies, and that merchandising workshops and seminars be conducted to assist the local businessman.

In addition to establishing a community wide economic development strategy and a city centre marketing campaign, merchandising assistance for the local businessman is necessary. This assistance could take two forms:

(a) The Chamber of Commerce could update local businessman on the programs, grants and assistance available through provincial and federal government agencies (e.g. Alberta Tourism and Small Business, Alberta Economic Development Agency, Alberta Culture, Alberta Consumer and Corporate Affairs, Heritage Canada, etc.);

(b) The Chamber of Commerce could set up a special research and development arm that would be responsible for holding workshops and seminars on merchandising techniques for the businessman (e.g. window displays, store management, retail shopping area design, etc.).

4.9 PROGRAMS FOR THE ORGANIZATION AND FINANCING OF THE CITY CENTRE

A city centre requires both an organizational framework to enable the various associations and groups to work together, and a financial mechanism to obtain funding for improvement projects. Therefore, programs to assist in the organization and financing of the city centre are provided here.

PROGRAMS

The following programs are designed to effectively organize the city centre.

Program I: Business Co-operation

That an organizational vehicle be established, through the Chamber of Commerce, to assist the Mall and City Centre Association in the co-operative marketing, financing and management of the city centre.

The Chamber of Commerce is the umbrella organization for all businesses in the City. The Chamber should develop a research section to serve as an information and educational centre for local merchants. As well, the research section could provide a common forum through which the mall and city centre association could initiate special events and projects for the city centre.

Program U: City Centre Development Authority

That an organization (City Centre Development Authority) comprised of both municipal and business representatives be established to be responsible for initiating, co-ordinating and directing city centre development and marketing actions.

The concept of a central management authority for the entire city centre, as occurs with shopping centres, is not new and has been used successfully by other large centres in Canada and the United States. The main function of such an authority would be to facilitate public-private co-operation on joint city centre development projects, co-ordinate civic and business actions to achieve the best results, and motivate the various city centre interests toward active and wholehearted participation.

In addition, a City Centre Development Authority would be responsible for implementing and managing many of the programs contained in this strategy.

A full time co-ordinator may be necessary, during the initial stages of the authority's formation and operation, to liaise with the private development sector, business community and council. Heritage Canada is one organization which provides experienced professionals to work in the community during the start-up stages of city centre projects and programs.

Program V: Intergovernmental Project Management Agency

That an organization (Intergovernmental Project Management Agency), comprised of municipal and provincial representatives, be established to manage the disposition and development of the gaol and railway properties, and that Council will consider allocation of sufficient funds to carry out these objectives.

Fort Saskatchewan has a unique opportunity to redesign and improve its city centre through the development of the gaol and railway properties. This development will require that the City and the Province work together on a partnership basis.

An intergovernmental agency, comprised of representatives from the Province and the City, will be required. Ideally, the City representatives would include local businessmen, elected officials and community members. In fact, the proposed City Centre Development Authority, with some minor composition changes, could also form the core City membership in the Intergovernmental Project Management Agency.

Program W: Business Revitalization Zone

That a Business Revitalization Zone (BRZ) be implemented for the retail core area of the city centre and a BRZ Action Plan be prepared.

The BRZ legislation, introduced in 1982 through the Municipal Government Act, serves two main functions:

(a) organization - a BRZ requires the businessmen in the zone to co-operate and participate in the improvement of the city centre; and

(b) financing - a BRZ enables funds to be collected from all businesses in the zone for projects of common benefit.

Once a BRZ is enacted, a specific action plan would need to be proposed to indicate the amount and application of the funds to be collected. Possible applications of BRZ funds in the city centre include:

- landscaping (e.g. trees, vegetation, plant boxes);
- construction of pedestrian amenity areas and parks;
- purchase and installation of street furnishings (e.g. benches, litter receptacles, street lights, bicycle racks);
- sidewalk and street improvements (e.g. boulevards, extended sidewalks, special pavement, ornamental brick, other improvements beyond 'normal' maintenance);
- purchase of historical markers or plaques;
- removal of overhead wiring and installation of below grade wiring;
- development of public walkways between buildings and the development of lane ways for pedestrian use; and
- funding for consultation with specialists regarding various aspects of city centre redevelopment, such as architectural design, landscaping and marketing analysis, and funding required to implement recommended programs for the city centre.

4.10 PROGRAMS TO MANAGE THE CITY CENTRE

A shopping mall's strength relies upon management's commitment to an overall 'plan of action', which contains both development and marketing activities. A similar approach is required for the city centre. Therefore, once this strategy is adopted, its programs and projects should be implemented, in accordance with the City Centre Action Plan, by those participants directly responsible.

PROGRAMS

The following program is intended to address the management of the city centre.

Program X: Program and Project Management

That the programs and projects comprising this strategy for the city centre be implemented by the City Centre Development Authority, the Intergovernmental Project Management Agency and other appropriate public and private interests, in accordance with an Action Plan.

The main functions of the City Centre Development Authority and the Intergovernmental Project Management Agency would be to facilitate public-private co-operation in city centre development projects, to co-ordinate civic and business activities to achieve the best results, and to motivate the various city centre interests to participate actively and wholeheartedly in revitalization initiatives.

This would require preparation of and commitment to an 'Action Plan'. This plan would contain details of the programs to be initiated in the shorter term, the authorities responsible and the timeframe involved. The Action Plan would be continuously updated and revised as necessary, in response to changing demands, new ideas and improved approaches.